the weekly standard

SEPTEMBER 17, 2001

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DISGRACE IN DURBAN
CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Farewell to American Greatness

David Brooks on Paul Cantor's *Gilligan Unbound: Pop Culture in the Age of Globalization*

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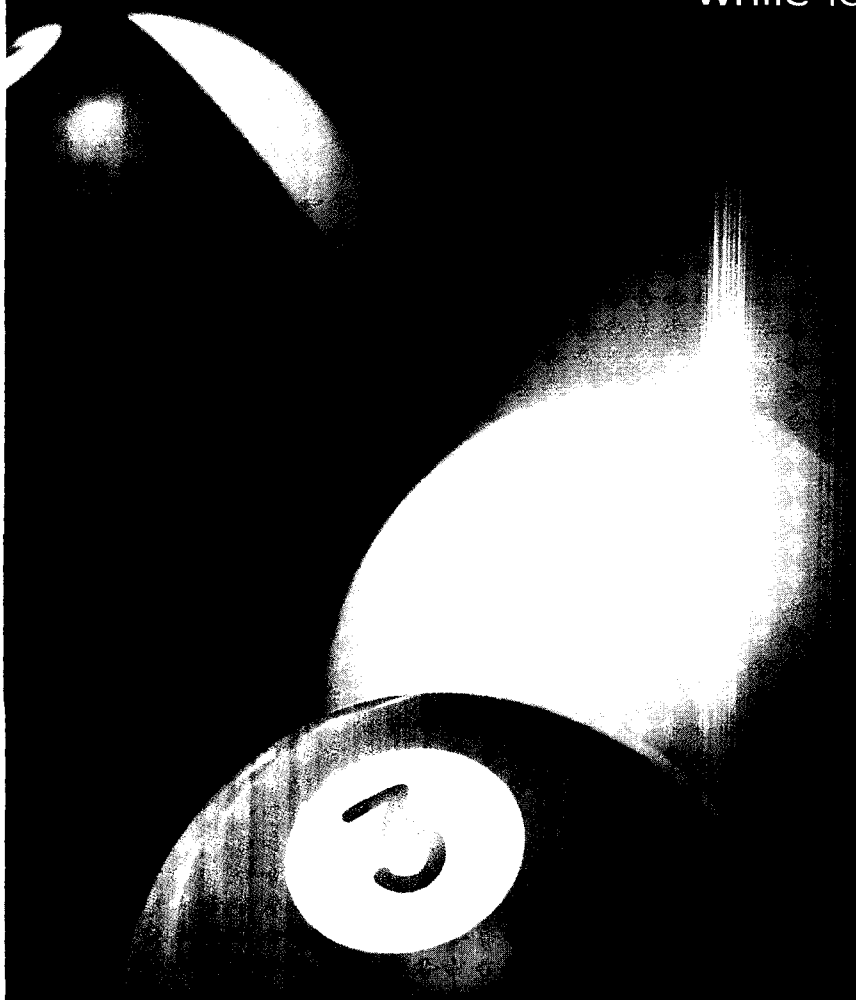

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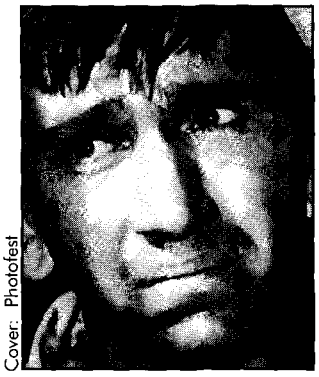

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the weekly Standard

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Casual

The Big Picture

When I was growing up in a picturesque Vermont town, some family friends used to show old movies in a theater at the local college. From time to time, they invited me to go along. Almost always, I had some sort of excuse for staying home, where I would end up doing absolutely nothing.

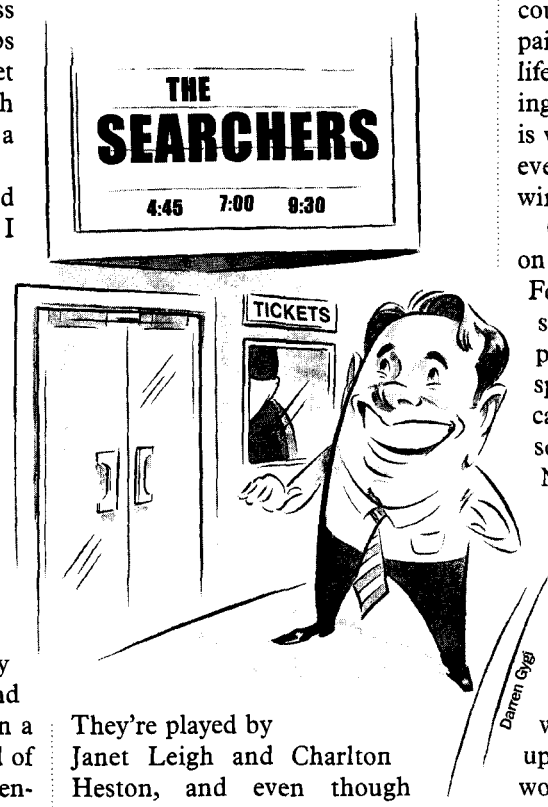
They showed the usual cinematic dead white males. Back then, I wasn't too interested in anything old or subtle. I preferred tapes of mindless action movies, full of pithy quips like "*Hasta la vista*, baby" and "Get off my plane!" These I would watch for hours on end, lying alone with a blanket on the living room floor.

Then for some reason, around my junior year of high school, I started taking them up on their offers and began to get acquainted with the cinematic canon. I saw films like *Touch of Evil* and *The Third Man* and *How Green Was My Valley* and *North by Northwest*. A few of these I'd seen long before on TV, and I'd liked them fine, but it was watching them in all their glory on a big screen that won my heart.

Seeing Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil* in a theater makes you wonder how anyone can watch it any other way. From the moment a hand in giant closeup sets the timer on a bomb, which fills your entire field of view, you can't look away. Every menacing image is all the more so for being large. You're far from the comfort of your living room, where you can always press the pause button and go get something from the fridge. In the theater, you can't move an inch.

That extraordinary first shot is four minutes long. It takes you on a roving tour of a Mexican border town, through a scene bursting with activity and texture. A laughing couple walks into an alley off an arcade, just as the unknown man who set the bomb puts it in the trunk of a car. The couple reappear, get into the car, and drive away. The camera ascends far above the street and tracks the car, alternately leading and following it through the town. A traffic cop stops the car briefly at a corner, where groups of laughing soldiers and women flirt, and a couple of men push a cart of sombreros across the street.

Now a second couple appear.



They're played by Janet Leigh and Charlton Heston, and even though they're mere details in this panorama—in which the real star is the directing—they're instantly recognizable. The camera follows them, and they walk past the car the first couple are driving and across the border into the United States. You'd miss most of this on television. In an era when it's possible to read license plates from space, you ought to be able to make out the faces of the actors a great director puts on the screen.

Scale is just as important in the famous crop duster sequence in *North by Northwest*. When I first saw the long, near-silent sequence of Cary Grant waiting interminably by the side of a road in the middle of nowhere, then watching a stranger approach, then staring at him as he stares back from across the road, my jaw dropped. It dropped again when I saw the Mount Rushmore scene. In both, Hitchcock's characters are dwarfed by the landscape, yet in spite of what has to be an infinite focus, their expressions are distinct.

How could this possibly be effective on television, where the actors would appear so small they could be anyone standing against a painted set? The big screen isn't just life-sized, it's larger than life, and seeing what great directors can do with it is worth getting out of the house for, even in the dead of a New England winter.

One movie I'd give anything to see on a big screen is *The Searchers*, John Ford's story of a man's seven-year search for his niece on the Texas plains soon after the Civil War. It's spectacular enough on TV, but you can just imagine what the opening scene would look like in a theater. No sooner would Aunt Martha open the door onto a vista of quintessential cowboy country—in a shot that many subsequent directors have stolen and the rest should—than a whole new appreciation of wandering and desolation and family loyalty would well inside you. A man rides up, and on the big screen the Duke would be so perfectly defined you could count the wrinkles on his face.

Looking back, I can think of a dozen invitations I kick myself for turning down, in my days of antisocial adolescent sloth. No more. Seeing a movie is about going out to a theater and watching pictures so big you can't escape them, and so absorbing you can't get them out of your mind.

David Donadio

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Fireworks for the Few

In the spring of 1993, President Clinton stalled runway traffic at the Los Angeles airport so he could receive a $200 haircut aboard Air Force One at the hands of the gifted Christophe. Or maybe he didn't—the facts of the case have never been established to THE SCRAPBOOK's satisfaction. But the story was seized on by Republicans as expressive of larger truths about Bill Clinton: his towering vanity, his disdain for the convenience of ordinary people, his monarchical sense of entitlement, his insistence on personal gratification at the expense of all other considerations. The tale of the $200 haircut became a kind of shorthand critique of the Clinton presidency.

A similar story may have been launched last Wednesday night, when, at the command of the White House, a massive fireworks display was uncorked from the Ellipse, adjacent to the Mall, following the State Dinner for President Fox of Mexico. Though it was done on public property, at public expense (the cost of a high-quality, 15-minute show could easily top $100,000), the fireworks were planned essentially as a private affair, put on for the benefit of those 100-plus guests who were lucky, or rich, or well connected enough to cadge an invitation to the dinner.

The show began at 11 P.M., when most people are getting ready for bed but just as the president's favored guests were moving on to the White House balcony to savor the night air and digest their Fava Bean and Chanterelle Ragout. The president's staff gave no public notice of the fireworks, which meant that no one else had a chance to enjoy them. A public announcement might have brought thousands of people to the Mall. But what fun would that be? This was a special treat, for special people.

To explain all the secrecy, the White House invokes "security concerns"—the common excuse employed nowadays to justify the remoteness of the rulers from the ruled. This is why, for example, President Clinton banned non-government vehicles from Pennsylvania Avenue, and why—just wait—President Bush will soon renege on his campaign promise to reopen the street to the traffic of average citizens. But it is a particularly pitiful excuse in the case of a fireworks display. At the first kaboom, the president was already securely hunkered down in his compound. The only "threat" would have been to guests leaving the White House in their Town Cars when the party was over. Imagine poor Clint Eastwood or Alan Greenspan or Plácido Domingo having to peer through the car window at hordes of Washingtonians! A security nightmare, clearly.

The "security" excuse is merely a ruse, of course, but the president's men should beware of constantly invoking it anyway. For like the tale of Clinton's haircut, the fireworks story is expressive of many things, none of them flattering to the president. It plays to the caricature of Republicans as royalists, sipping their brandy and savoring their cigars, surrounding a frightened king—not merely a monarch but a querulous one, refusing even to grant his subjects the meager consolations of bread and circuses, and fireworks. ♦

And We Won't Even Get Rich Doing It

As a going away present to retiring Senate Banking chairman Phil Gramm of Texas, the Senate last week passed the 2001 version of the Gramm-sponsored Export Administration Act by a vote of 85-14. Among the 14 senators who opposed the bill, Sens. Jesse Helms, Jon Kyl, John McCain, Richard Shelby, and Fred Thompson are to be particularly commended for putting up a rear-guard fight for effective export controls.

Of course, the real present was to the business interests who helped draft the bill, poured tons of cash into various coffers to gain support for it, and will soon be free to sell all kinds of dangerous, multi-use technologies to states like China. The bill, ludicrously, gives the Commerce Department the preeminent role in stemming exports of technologies that would be detrimental to our national security, precludes the departments of State and Defense from having anything but the most minimal say in these matters, and radically curtails the president's discretion in stopping such exports by setting up standards that make it nearly impossible for him to act under the color of law. The incongruity is that the Senate bill is fully supported by the White House and an administration which argues with a straight face that it is still serious about weapons proliferation.

Given all the pressure applied to Congress and the administration by commercial interests, one would think that the stakes for U.S. business were really high. But the appalling reality is that the trade being regulated is no more than 3 percent of our total exports. ♦

The Still-Hairless Man

"Men without chest hair," David Skinner noticed in our July

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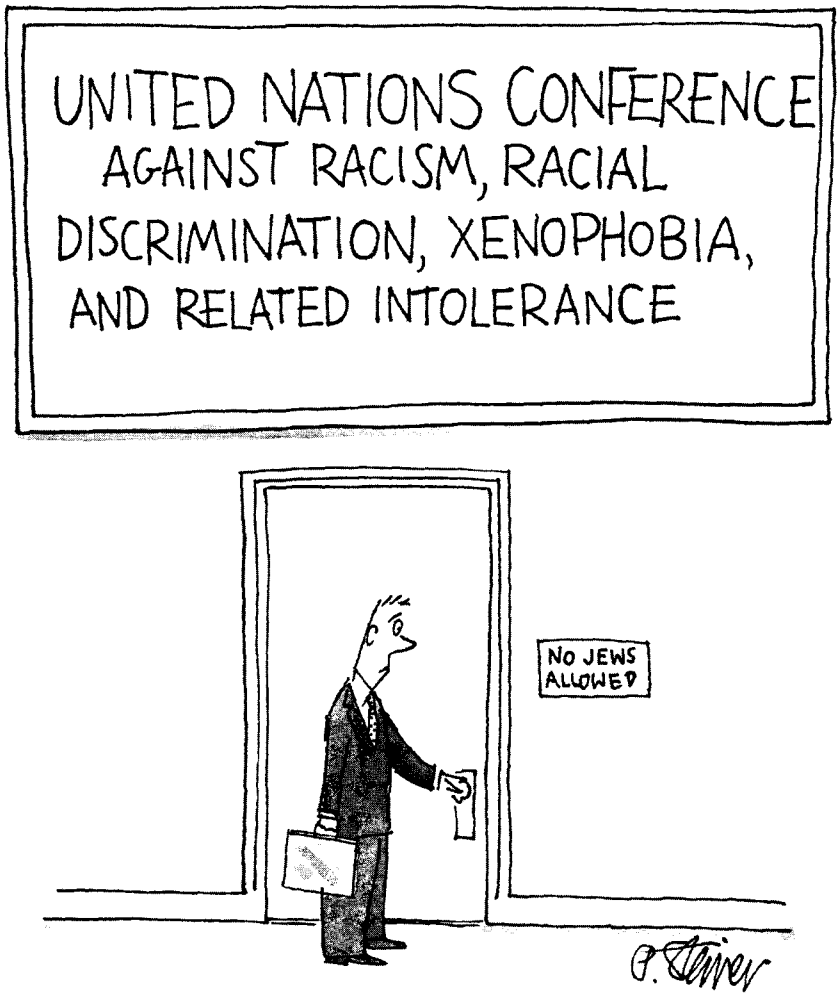

21, 1999, issue, have taken over the important male roles in movies and television. The depilated man represented the logical endpoint of the mainstreaming of gay culture and popular disillusionment with traditional concepts of manliness.

Alas, this turns out to be one of those trends, the noticing of which does not mark its high-water point. Recently the *Hartford Advocate* reported on one talent agency where 90 percent of the (adult) male models have no body hair. And last week, the *Wall Street Journal* quoted the editor of *Men's Health* magazine as saying that if a male model showed up on a cover shoot with hair on his chest, "we'd ask him to remove it." Where the entertainment and fashion industries lead, the young men of America follow. Gillette, according to the *Journal*, is considering devoting a section of its website to explaining how to shave one's chest.

Our advice: Let it grow, let it grow, let it grow. As Skinner put it two years ago, "Where can one find reflections of manliness, if everywhere you turn, the American male seems boyish, hairless, shorn of any sign that he is an adult?" ♦

Keeping in Mind the Olympic Spirit (cont.)

As part of our ongoing campaign of supervision to help China prepare for the 2008 Olympic games, a couple of more helpful suggestions for Beijing:

*Intimidation campaigns aren't sporting, even if successful. We refer here not to your own citizens but to American investment bankers. Last week there were reports that firms such as Goldman Sachs and Merrill Lynch "backed away from helping Taiwan hold an investment promotional tour in the U.S. for fear of upsetting Beijing." Apparently, this decision was influenced by the fact that Credit Suisse First Boston—after helping promote a similar tour for Taiwan in Europe—was punished by being removed from its underwriter role in the planned share offerings by two major state-owned Chinese companies.

Now, capitalism is nothing if not a contact sport—"creative destruction" was Schumpeter's phrase—but your willingness to strongarm financial giants sends a signal that it's the destruction part of capitalism you like, not the creative part.

*Don't expect sympathy for your Falun Gong crackdown. We refer here to the disgraceful propaganda pamphlet "'Falun Gong' Is a Cult" that your embassy in Washington distributed to staffers on Capitol Hill last week. "Our fight against Falun Gong is part of a worldwide struggle against destructive cults," you wrote in a cover letter. "We believe we have a great deal to learn from the experience of other countries, the United States included." The pamphlet then compares Falun Gong to "the Branch Davidian cult in the U.S." We wonder what lesson you think you learned from that tragic massacre in Waco. Shoot first and ask questions later? We'll be back with more tips, as needed. Sincerely, THE SCRAPBOOK. ♦

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Krauthammer's War

Charles Krauthammer is to be commended for his detailed account of the truth about the Middle East conflict ("Arafat's War," Sept. 3). Unfortunately, most of the media, whether deliberately or ignorantly, get it wrong. Not only the Palestinians, but the Arab world, is interested in more, much more, than "land for peace." They desire, and seek, the destruction of Israel. Let them unequivocally, in word and deed, and over a sustained period, repudiate that position, and they would see Israel modify its position accordingly. As Krauthammer says, and as must be repeated again and again, "the mask is off." What is underneath is called anti-Semitism.

Marvin Wolfert
Foxboro, MA

I was pleased to read Charles Krauthammer's article regarding the moral right Israel has to defend itself and the pragmatic and ultimately moral way it is attempting this self-defense.

The Palestinian leadership has constantly failed its own people and brought tragedy to the entire region. It has attempted to overthrow the Jordanian government, wrecked Lebanon, supported Saddam Hussein in his invasion of Kuwait (which led to the expulsion of Palestinian laborers from the Gulf states), and attacked American and Western (as well as Israeli) people.

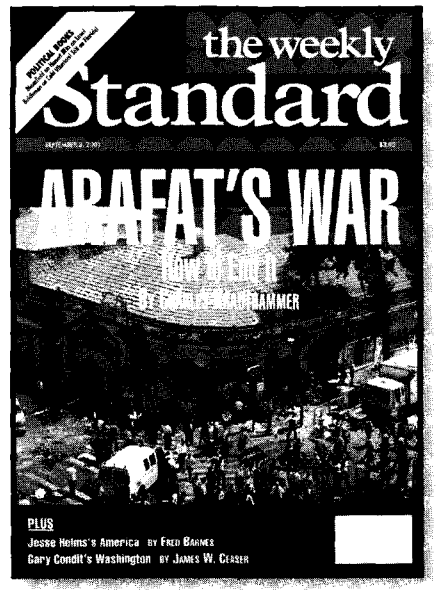
Israel, in its never-ending search for peace, has taken risks by entering peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan. It did the same when it agreed to the return of Arafat and his clique to the region and offered undreamed-of concessions to the Palestinians. Yet, in return, the Palestinian Authority has consistently violated its agreements under the Oslo accord by engaging in anti-Semitic propaganda, brainwashing its children to hate, enlarging its armed forces beyond what was agreed to, and engaging in massive violence. The result for its own people has been loss of jobs, chaos, etc.

Unlike the Palestinian terrorists who target innocent civilians, Israelis risk their own lives to stop those directly responsible for violence. This is a country that should be respected and admired, not defamed. Israel is America's only true ally in the region, and the region's only democracy. Why have the Muslims living within Israel proper barely protested? Because they would rather live in the democratic state of Israel than under the dictatorial and corrupt Palestinian Authority.

One day the Palestinians will hopefully get competent and non-corrupt leadership. They deserve better leaders.

Ed Lasky
Northbrook, IL

Thank you for another pearl of an article by Charles Krauthammer, who manages to articulate so much common sense so effortlessly. One wonders



why the State Department is having such a tough time catching on. The only disputable element of Krauthammer's strategy is the part that calls for evacuating some settlements after the inevitable, and long overdue, Israeli attack on Arafat himself. This was somewhat surprising coming from Krauthammer, and is almost certainly a move that would delegitimize the Jewish people's religious, historical, national, and moral claim to the entire land of Israel. In contradistinction to this claim, the mythical "Palestinians"—undistinguishable until 53 years ago from Jordanians, Syrians, Lebanese, or other citizens of the Ottoman Empire—have none.

Justin C. Danilewitz
Villanova, PA

The Weekly Standard must ensure that Condoleezza Rice reads Charles Krauthammer's penetrating analysis, "Arafat's War." She will recognize its profound truth and, as President Bush's chief foreign policy adviser, be in a position to prepare him for the inevitable.

Krauthammer is not only right about Arafat's intentions and what Israel must do to deal with the eight increasingly destructive years of the Oslo deception. He is right in his estimate that Israel will have at most three or four days before pressure on Bush to stop a massive Israeli action against the enemy will become overwhelming. Time will be the crucial element here, and President Bush will need to understand beforehand the depth of the solution underway in order to summon the strength to allow the action to conclude. President Bush seems to me inclined favorably toward Israel's plight and cause, and has given clear evidence that he resists imposing a peace on Israel. But the action Krauthammer sketches will test Bush's wisdom and strength, and so it is most important that he be prepared in advance to stand against the hurricane when it hits.

Michael Balch
Iowa City, IA

In his passionate style, Charles Krauthammer makes the case that Israel has no choice but to go on an all-out offensive against Arafat. Indeed, as has become evident to all who have eyes to see, Arafat is a liability to peace. The bloodshed can continue ad infinitum, or the Israeli government can opt to "throw the bum out," as was done by past Arab leaders who demonstrated less patience than Israel has for the murder and chaos that follow in Arafat's wake.

Jeanette Goldsmith
Brooklyn, NY

Charles Krauthammer's solution to the violence in the Middle East put him exactly in the Meir Kahane camp. His solution to violence is violence against the Palestinian people. It is as if the Palestinians have no legitimate claims of oppression or violence being inflicted upon them. Only the good and peace-loving Jews have any legitimacy. All the land belongs to the Jews, and the Palestinians have no claim whatsoever.

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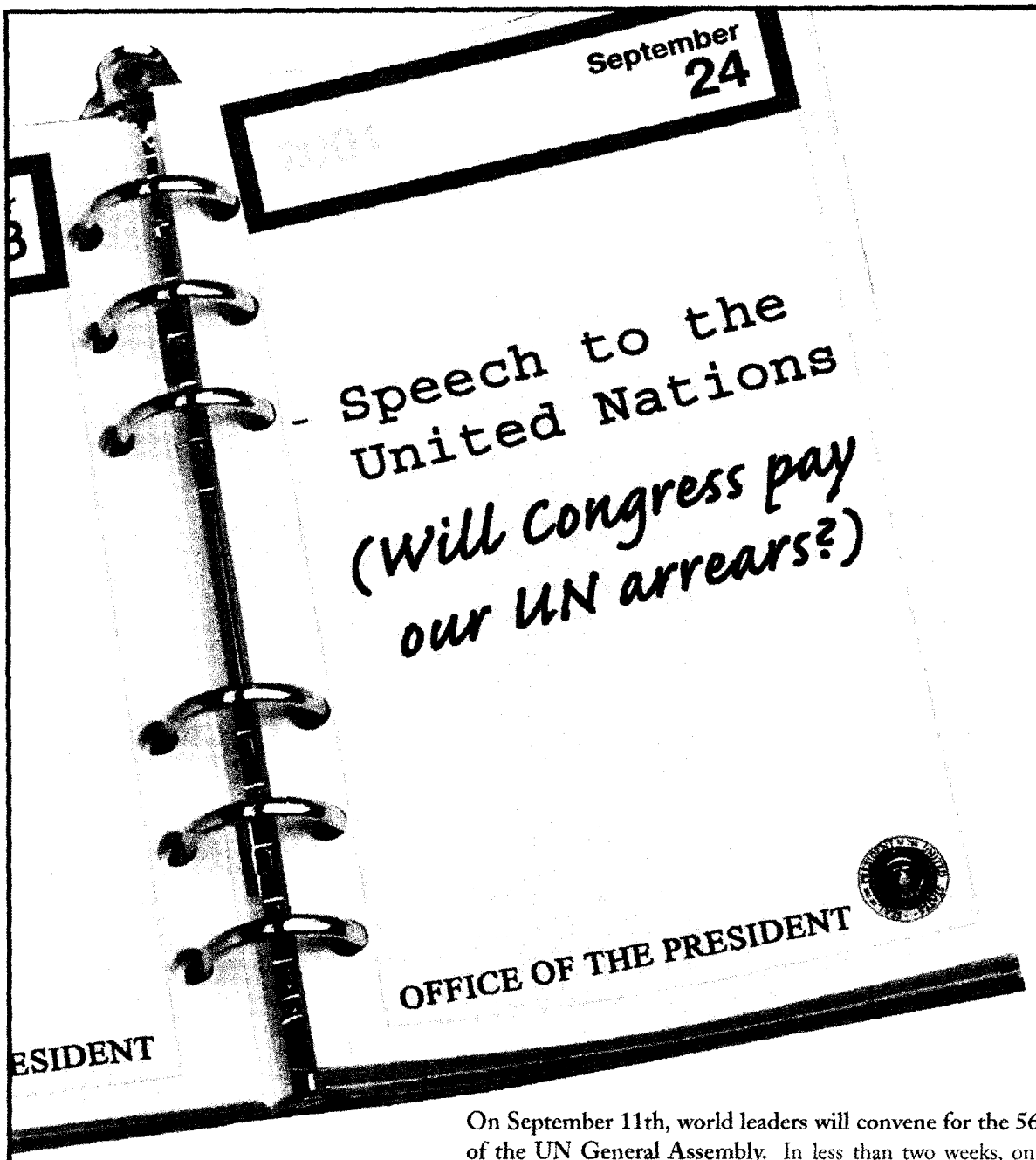

On September 11th, world leaders will convene for the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly. In less than two weeks, on September 24th, President Bush will make his first speech to the United Nations. The U.S. will either be the UN's largest debtor, with President Bush facing sharp criticism and even embarrassment for unpaid bills, or a nation that keeps its word and honors its commitments. President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell want the U.S. to pay its bills.

In 1999, Congress passed the bi-partisan Helms-Biden legislation that promised the U.S. would pay its overdue UN bills if the UN met certain conditions. The UN did that and more, even naming an Inspector General to cut waste and mismanagement. But now Congressional gridlock is still blocking payment.

Before President Bush makes his first speech at the UN, Congress should honor our commitment and pay our overdue bills.

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Krauthammer is wrong in his analysis of the situation and of Arafat. The current violence in Israel is solvable. Instead of discussion, we have had 50 years of Zionist propaganda. There has been absolutely no balance in the information given to the public and no direct criticism of the Zionist conspiracy to disenfranchise the Palestinian people.

The beginning of the current crisis was in New York City in the Hotel Biltmore, where 600 Zionists met during World War II and decided the fate of the Palestinian people. To their credit, some Jews protested that this conference would produce only trouble and by its nature not succeed. They have been proven correct. Any approach to the Palestinian-Israeli problems must include discussing this infamous meeting, as it set the agenda for Zionism.

Since the founding of Israel, the Palestinians have been bludgeoned over the head continuously in all sorts of ways. The most galling has been the enactment of the Nationality Law and the 1972 Israeli Supreme Court ruling on it. This law has created an apartheid state. It denies rights to the Palestinians that would be naturally assumed by any person familiar with democracy.

The American public has been given short shrift by the press and news media and by all political parties. No agreement between Arafat and Israel will succeed because of a signed piece of paper and a handshake. The rights of an indigenous people must be restored. Recriminations do nothing. Open discussions are the answer.

ROBERT J. TILLMAN
Richmond Hill, NY

I AGREE WITH Charles Krauthammer's analysis, but not his conclusions. Separation will not be a solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, even after Arafat and his collaborators are chased out. As Krauthammer clearly explains, by now a generation of Palestinians has been brought up on hatred of Israel, Zionism, and Jews. No wall will protect Israel from suicide bombers and other forms of guerrilla warfare. The relative quiet on the Gaza front should not be taken as permanent for a number of reasons:

First, the differences in the geography of the flat Gaza strip compared with mountainous Judea and Samaria. Second, in many areas, the fence in Gaza is torn down in a matter of days after it is erected. Third, infiltrators do manage to get through the Gaza "wall," as did the murderers of the three soldiers in the Margaliot outpost in late August.

Finally, why should Arafat bother waging guerrilla warfare from Gaza, which is relatively distant from the main Israeli cities, when he can wage that war from Judea and Samaria, within a short distance from all Israeli population centers? Jenin is close to Afula, the Haifa metropolitan area, and Hadera. Shchem (Nablus) and Kalkilia are near Hadera, Natanya, Herzelia, and the Tel-Aviv metropolitan area. Rammalla, Jericho, Beit-Lehem, and Beit-Jalla surround the Jerusalem metropolitan area. Thus, the probability of succeeding while operating from these areas is much greater than from Gaza, which is relatively isolated by vast agricultural regions.

The only solution is a total war that will clear the area from Arafat, his collaborators, and his soldiers. This war should be followed by annexation of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza to Israel, imposing Israeli sovereignty over the area and establishing an autonomy for the civilian self-rule of the Palestinians. All these, under the umbrella of Israeli security control.

ISRAEL D. NEBENZAHL
Graduate School of Business Administration
Bar-Ilan University
Ramat-Gan, Israel

LITERARY GREATNESS

HURRAH FOR Andrew Ferguson's stirring defense of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* ("The President's Very Favorite Book," Sept. 3), and hurrah for President Bush for sticking by this superb children's book in the face of mean-spirited criticism.

As the father of a 16-month-old, I've received a crash course in children's books. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* is among the best of them: My son loves it and I can read it to him repeatedly without mind-numbing boredom—surely the test of a children's book that works.

Leave it to a spoilsport like the *New York Times*'s Gail Collins to draft this friendly and harmless (and decidedly non-political) proto-insect into her anti-Bush drivel. While she would no doubt prefer *Heather Has Two Mommies*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude: The Picture Edition*, or *I'm A Happy Sandinista*, our family will stick with our cupcake-chewing friend.

MICHAEL C. BYRNE
Asheville, NC

HIGH MINDED

C'MON, GUYS, LIGHTEN UP. The silly little ditty "Because I Got High" is just that: a silly little ditty (THE SCRAPBOOK, Sept. 10). I'm surprised to find THE WEEKLY STANDARD in league with MTV in its fit of selective priggishness. As a political conservative and former pothead, I'm willing to bet most of your writers are about my age and am doubtful they spent their formative 20s wagging their finger at the cannabis.

PETE MUNSEY
Baltimore, MD

THE SCRAPBOOK SEEMS PUZZLED that MTV balked at running a video that promotes drug use. It's just a sign that savvy businessmen run Viacom, whose MTV unit delivers roughly $1 billion in annual revenues. These middle-aged executives are making a mint peddling sexual promiscuity to teens. But they know that if they added a pro-drug message to the mix, people might finally take notice of MTV's young viewership. Safer to keep selling sex to kids rather than risk additional scrutiny.

MICHAEL PARANZINO
Rockville, MD

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the weekly Standard

Making the Best of a Bad Lockbox

In a perfect world—heck, in a merely rational world—President Bush's strategy for combating the economic downturn and battered stock market would be obvious: He'd use the huge Social Security surplus to cut taxes, stimulate the economy, and increase stock values. That surplus, after all, means the government will suck in a projected $158 billion more in revenue than it will spend in 2002. Whether you're a Keynesian or a supply sider, that's a formula for chilling economic activity, not heating things up.

So, Bush would declare that the nation's overriding priority is saving the economy. (He'd also insist, correctly, that this would benefit Social Security in the long run.) His new agenda would call for advancing the just-enacted rate reductions on individual income so they'd take full effect now rather than in 2006, cutting the capital gains tax rate to 15 percent from 20 percent and eliminating all holding requirements, immediately killing the inheritance tax, providing business tax relief of some kind, and so on. In fact, the Club for Growth and a handful of Republicans, most notably Sen. Pete Domenici, have advocated this. And it's the right course. Only, for now, it can't happen—unless, as Bush says, we're caught in a recession, war, or national emergency.

Cracking open the lockbox, as Sen. Pete Domenici has urged, makes all the sense in the world. It would juice up the economy and allow Bush to fund the military adequately.

Why not? It's the lockbox, stupid. Remember, it was Republicans, not Al Gore, who concocted this in the first place. They invoked it in 1998 as a tactic to trump President Clinton's insistence that the then-burgeoning surplus should be targeted on "saving Social Security first." Okay, Republicans said, you want to protect Social Security? We'll make it totally off-limits by putting surplus payroll taxes in a lockbox that can't be touched. In last year's election, Bush endorsed the idea as well, if only to keep Gore from bashing him on Social Security. Gore attacked him anyway, but that's another story. For today's purposes, the lockbox—which doesn't really exist except as a bookkeeping metaphor for insulating Social Security—is all but sacrosanct. Democrats are poised to make any tampering with the surplus their major theme against Republicans in the 2002 election.

Congressional Republicans are terrified. GOP leaders in the House and Senate met separately, then together, then with the president, and agreed last week on a fresh commitment to *not* spend a penny of the Social Security surplus. They'd rather gamble on an economic turnaround occurring than risk Democratic attacks for raiding the surplus and jeopardizing Social Security. On one level, this makes sense. After promoting the lockbox as significant and real, how can they now admit it's fiction, shouldn't have been taken seriously in the first place, and ought to be jettisoned?

Or in Bush's case, after noisily warning Social Security is going bankrupt and establishing a commission to deal urgently with the problem, how can Bush suddenly say it's fine to dip into the Social Security surplus? That would raise a serious credibility issue. On another level, though, cracking open the lockbox, as Domenici has advocated, makes all the sense in the world. And not only to juice up the economy. This would allow Bush to fund the military adequately to make up for the mindless downgrading of defense in the Clinton years.

For sure, the lockbox has put Bush and Republicans in a bind. But there's more they can do besides kneeling in the Oval Office and praying that predictions of an economic resurgence beginning late this year or early in 2002 turn out to be accurate. On Capitol Hill, Republicans worry the White House places too much stock in these predictions (see Stephen Moore's "First, Kill All the Economists," on page 18). When Republican congressional aides met with Larry Lindsey, Bush's chief economic adviser, a few weeks ago, they were alarmed at how frequently his

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Michael Ramirez

response to their concern about the economy was, don't worry, the economy will soon recover. Actually, Lindsey could have turned the table on them by pointing out that Republicans in Congress put the administration in a straitjacket by insisting on fealty to the lockbox. In truth, Bush isn't required to go along, but he'd risk a nasty split with his closest allies if he decided to spend more of the surplus.

As luck would have it, there's an agenda Republicans on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue should be able to agree on. It's not bold, but saddled as they are with the lockbox, it's probably the best they can do for the moment. The White House says that passing an energy bill and trade promotion authority would provide stimulus. Maybe, but not enough. Congressional Republicans want to go further, cutting the capital gains rate, making the Bush tax cuts passed earlier this year permanent, extending the ban on taxing the Internet, enacting tort reform. All this can be done without reaching into the Social Security surplus. And there's more. If the non-Social Security surplus was enlarged through spending cuts, Bush's individual rate reductions could be advanced a year or two. Also, defense spending increases in 2003 and 2004 would become possible.

Bush sounded cool last week when asked about Senate GOP leader Trent Lott's proposal to trim the capital gains tax rate to 15 percent for two years. He shouldn't be. Yes, embracing a cap gains cut would allow Democrats and the media to say that Bush was tacitly admitting his larger tax cut, enacted in the spring, isn't working. "I'd like us to just take a look-see to make sure the stimulus package that we now are implementing works," Bush said. But the rest of us have already had our look-see, and while it may be working, it certainly wasn't front-loaded enough to help a stalled economy this year, when help is most needed. It's time for Bush and his aides to get over any concern that new tax relief mocks the president's signature tax cut. Instead, they should see it, and explain it, as more of a good thing.

For all their angst over Democratic attacks, Republicans have an unheralded accomplishment to cheer about. From the beginning of the year, denying Democrats the opportunity to spend the surplus has been a major goal. It's been achieved. The Bush tax cut ate up a large chunk of the non-Social Security surplus, and the loss of revenue due to the weak economy accounted for the rest. By championing the lockbox even more vociferously than Republicans, Democrats won't get to spend any of the Social Security surplus either. "We are exactly where we want to be," says Rep. Roy Blunt, the deputy House GOP whip. True, given the soft economy, "it's not quite as comfortable to be where we are as we'd hoped it would be," he says. But then, it's not a perfect world.

—Fred Barnes, for the Editors

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Disgrace in Durban

The U.N. conference on racism was worse than just hot air. BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

AP / Wide World Photos

Cuban strongman Fidel Castro and Yasser Arafat in Durban, Aug. 31.

THERE ARE FEW MUSEUMS as powerful as the Holocaust Museum in Washington, but it contains what appears to be a structural oddity. The exhibit fills three floors. The middle floor covers the Holocaust itself; the last, the rescue and aftermath. But the entire first floor, which can take hours to go through, consists of the prelude, the 1930s and the relentless Nazi campaign to delegitimize the very existence of Jews.

Why is the prelude given as much space as the Holocaust itself? Because the prelude is so crucial. Unless the Jews had first been stripped of their very humanity, their extermination would not have been possible. Before the great crime comes the great lie.

Charles Krauthammer is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Which is why the U.N. Conference on Racism in Durban is so important. It has been wrongly dismissed by many as mere hot air, the usual Third-World-dictators-in-committee cavorting in their playpen of meaningless demagoguery. But that misses the point. This was a universal conference whose overriding objective was to brand one country and one people as uniquely, transcendently evil. The whole point was to rekindle the Arab campaign to delegitimize the planet's single Jewish state—and thus prepare the psychological and political ground for its extinction.

Whether the final communiqué contained that language is irrelevant. The charge that Zionism is racism dominated all debate both inside and outside the conference. For two weeks, it became the subject of discussion in every capital from Pretoria to Paris and all the media in between. As one of the Egyptian delegates explained with satisfaction, Zionism as racism is now back on the international agenda and returned to diplomatic discourse at the highest level.

Of course, it is absurd that Israel be vilified as racist by the likes of Sudan, whose Arab government is conducting a genocidal war against the black Christians in the south; Iran, which hangs Jews for being Jews; and Uganda, which expelled all its Indian citizens. But just because the accusation is Orwellian does not diminish its political significance.

Yasser Arafat's speech was particularly important. He portrayed Israel as the last of the colonial nations. And not just colonial, but *intrinsically* racist. Since everyone agrees racism and colonialism are evil and their eradication a positive good, to place Israel in that category—again, uniquely—is to legitimize its destruction.

For believers in Oslo, the irony is rather extreme. Many Israelis and Americans made themselves believe that Arafat was sincere when he signed that piece of paper in September 1993 recognizing Israel. That he continually said and did otherwise (for instance, creating textbooks whose maps show Palestine with no Israel) was willfully ignored. But after Durban, it can no longer be ignored or denied. In Durban, Arafat did not just declare his own rejection of Israel's right to exist. He tried to enlist the entire international community to join in that rejection.

But Durban went far beyond simple nonrecognition. It also went far beyond just states defaming Israel and Jews. Non-governmental organizations—led by Palestinian and other Arab "human rights" groups and supported by many other NGOs from around the world—issued their own declaration characterizing Israel as "a racist apartheid state" and accusing it of "systematic perpetration of racist crimes including war crimes, acts of genocide, and ethnic cleansing, . . . alien domination and subjugation." This has been correctly termed the

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most anti-Semitic international document produced since the Third Reich.

It took almost a decade of relentless anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda to prepare Germany, and indeed the rest of Europe, for the mass murder to follow. Durban marks the beginning of an Arab campaign of comparable dehumanization.

By invoking the word genocide regarding Israel's treatment of Palestinians, the campaign against Israel goes nuclear. Genocide is the ultimate crime. Genocidal societies are not just to be shunned; they must be destroyed. Their eradication is not merely desirable; it is imperative. The point of accusing Israel of genocide is to make the destruction of Israel an act of righteous justice, to enlist non-Arabs and non-Muslims in a secular jihad.

That such a monstrous proposition should even get a hearing anywhere is shocking. And that it would be the central focus at a conference supposedly opposed to racism—and the subject of serious textual negotiations involving such otherwise rational international players as Canada, Norway, and the European Union—is, in itself, a scandal.

It is also a demonstration of how far-reaching and effective the Palestinian campaign against Israel has been. This is not hot air. This is a program with two parts. The part in Durban was intended to legitimize the eradication of Israel. The part on the ground—in Israel—is intended to achieve that outcome by means of war.

For the time being, the war consists of relentless terrorist attacks, against a background of running gun battles, drive-by shootings, and roadside bombs. But this is just the beginning. The ground is being prepared for two major possible escalations. One is the explosion of the conflict into a regional war in which Syria, Iraq, Iran, and possibly Egypt and Saudi Arabia join the fight against Israel, a replay of 1948-49 with the same objective, a *judenrein* Middle East. Were this to happen, the Arab states might be accused of border-crossing aggression. Armed with an overwhelming international consensus that Israel is colonialist, racist, and genocidal, however, the aggressors would be transformed into liberators.

But there is a second and even more ominous possibility. There is already discussion in the Arab press of the legitimacy of using weapons of mass destruction against Israel. "The Palestinian Resistance can obtain such weapons for its battle against the enemy at a minimal cost," writes Issam Al-Ghazi, editor of the Egyptian weekly *Al-Maydan*, speaking of "biological and chemical weapons—the atomic bomb of the poor." How? "One hundred mice with the 'Super Plague' virus . . . could be released in the streets of Tel Aviv. Likewise, a small bottle of Plague-infected mosquitoes can be used to destroy entire Israeli cities."

The Bush administration was right to walk out of the U.N. Conference on Racism. It should never have shown up in the first place. You do not show up at a Nuremberg rally.

Of course, the practical considerations against doing so—Israel's retaliatory deterrent—have not changed. But the moral considerations are changing. The vicious international campaign to place a genocidal Israel outside the pale of humanity is establishing the psychological basis for genocidal attacks on Israel itself.

That such a program should draw legitimacy from a conference sponsored by the U.N., paid for by the West, and dedicated to combating racism is grotesque. Which is why the Bush administration was right to walk out of the conference. It should never have shown up in the first place. You do not show up at a Nuremberg rally.

Moreover, walking out is not enough. It is too passive a response to a frontal assault on decency. What can the United States do? There is one simple straightforward action it can take to shift the focus of debate from the delegitimation of Israel back to where it should be: the delegitimation of those conducting this cynical campaign. What to do? Put back on the State Department terrorism list those who are plainly and openly practicing terrorism—the PLO and the Palestinian Authority. That means cutting off all American aid to, and official recognition of, the Palestinian Authority.

It is not just what Arafat says in Durban. It is what he does on the ground in Israel. Almost weekly there is a mass murder of Jews (and many that are stopped by Israeli preventative measures) that occurs under the protection of the Palestinian Authority, with the encouragement of the official Palestinian media, and to the congratulations of Yasser Arafat. After a suicide bomber murdered 21 youngsters and horribly maimed dozens of others outside a Tel Aviv discothèque, Arafat sent the killer's parents a letter thanking them for their son's "heroic martyrdom operation, . . . the model of manhood and sacrifice for the sake of Allah and the homeland."

We Americans have our own forms of pariahhood. We rightly ostracize and isolate the likes of Syria, Libya, and the Usama bin Laden gang. The PLO was taken off this list in 1993 when Arafat signed the Oslo accords promising to make peace, renounce violence and terrorism, and accept Israel as a legitimate member of the Middle East community. With all of these promises betrayed—now publicly and openly in Durban—there is no possible excuse for the United States to keep the PLO and the Palestinian Authority off the terrorism list.

Arafat is preparing a war of extinction against a friend. It is time to put him beyond the pale. ♦

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First, Kill All the Economists

Or at least ignore them. Their forecasts are almost always wrong. BY STEPHEN MOORE

WHEN LARRY LINDSEY, George Bush's top economic adviser, was asked to defend his latest upbeat economic forecast—a return to 3 percent growth by the end of the year and then clear sailing for as far as the eye can see—he cited as corroborating expert witnesses a handful of Wall Street economists who agree that the worst of the downturn is safely behind us.

Uh-oh. I would have been more reassured if he had cited the Backstreet Boys as his source for confidence.

In fact, if Wall Street economists agree that a financial recovery is imminent, this is about as reliable a sign as God sends to us mere mortals that we'd better prepare for some tough sledding. It turns out that for the last eight or so years, one of life's few certainties is that the so-called Blue Chip economists are always wrong when they gaze into their crystal balls and try to discern the future of our financial affairs. If since 1996 you'd taken the consensus prediction of unemployment and economic growth made by the 40 economists that the *Wall Street Journal* has selected for its start-of-the-year economic forecast, and then you had invested based upon the highly defensible assumption that they were dead wrong, you would be a very rich man today.

Between 1995 and 2000, the economics profession was rigidly overpessimistic about the U.S. economy and the stock market's potential. Back in the mid 1990s, when the Dow Jones Industrial Average was still at about 4,000, the bears ruled the roost. There's a lot of truth to the quip that economists have successfully predicted five of the past two recessions. Slavishly devoted to the bankrupt Keynesian voodoo notion that the economy can't grow faster than a 3 percent clip without striking a match and dropping it into the gasoline can of pent-up inflation, economists declared with unequivocal hubris that what actually happened to the economy in the late '90s was scientifically impossible. Four to 5 percent real growth rates? Sorry, they told us, you just can't get there from here. Not unless you're willing to tolerate a gut-wrenching, 1970s-style burst of rising prices.

David Hale, the incisive Chicago-based chief economist at Zurich Kemper and one of the few guys with a knack for getting the economic story right, recently reviewed the Blue Chip forecasts of his economics brethren and compared them with what happened in real life. The sobering findings are contained in a report called "Why Economists Can't Predict," to be released next month by the Media Research Center. And what a tale of economic malpractice the report conveys.

During the period 1994-1999, the Blue Chip forecasters projected an average annual growth rate of only 2.3 percent for the U.S. economy. What was the actual result? An annual growth rate of 3.9 percent. This may seem like a trivial error, but in the forecasting world, this is the equivalent of going to the hospital for a tonsillectomy only to have the surgeon remove your kidney instead.

If this seems an unjustly harsh assessment of my professional colleagues, consider this blunder: Between 1994 and 2000, the U.S. economy actually grew a gigantic 40 percent faster than the Blue Chip consensus forecast for the period. The forecasters had it about right—they just apparently forgot to include California and Arizona in their calculations. Honestly, how in the world do these people keep their jobs?

But wait, the story gets a lot worse. When was it that economists finally realized they had been snookered once too often by the new information-age economy? When did they finally turn optimistic on the outlook for the U.S. economy? Answer: around July of 2000. What exquisite timing. The spring/summer of 2000 was the magical moment when the economy and the stock market reached their peak. The United States recorded an audacious 5 percent growth rate in the second quarter of 2000, and the Dow closed in on its high of 11,000 while the Nasdaq briefly clawed its way above 5,000. So it turns out that from 1996 through 2001, the year that economists predicted the briskest economic expansion was this year, and yet in reality we will be lucky to end 2001 with a measly 1 percent growth rate. By the end of this year, a dip into negative GDP territory is disconcertingly plausible, notwithstanding the Bush White House's cheery message of recovery by Thanksgiving.

A number of years ago, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page had a field day lampooning economists by showing that a blindfolded person throwing darts at a dartboard pasted with various future economic scenarios often outperformed the grandiose predictions of overpaid Ivy League-trained Ph.D. economists. These days a $19.95 investment in that dartboard game doesn't look all that unreasonable.

So why do so many heralded economic whiz kids have such miserable track records? I have posed that question to two supply-side oriented economists, former Reagan economist

Stephen Moore is president of the Club for Growth.

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Larry Kudlow and Brian Wesbury of Griffin, Kubik and Stephens. Both have been among the most accurate economic forecasters over the past half dozen years or so (in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king). They both agree that the villain here is the indoctrination of decades of defunct Keynesian economic logic. The Keynesian model programs economists to believe that too much of a good thing (growth) can lead to a bad thing (inflation). This theory became increasingly untenable in the '80s and '90s, when we had brisk economic growth and tumbling inflation at the same time. So then in the 1990s, economists like Laurence Meyer, Bill Clinton's neo-Keynesian appointee to the Federal Reserve Board, began touting a nuanced concept called NAIRU, the non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment. Economic growth rates above the NAIRU rate were said to be dangerously inflationary.

But what rate of growth, exactly, would trigger inflation? In the early 1990s, economists like Meyer hypothesized that roughly a 3 percent rate of economic growth was about all the economy could muster without awakening inflation from its slumber. Then when growth rates well in excess of 3 percent corresponded with declining rates of inflation, Meyer conceded that perhaps the NAIRU rate had now inched up to 3.5 percent. Then when *that* rate of growth was exceeded in 1998 and 1999 without a whiff of inflation, the NAIRU crowd hinted that perhaps a growth rate of up to 4 percent could be sustained without inflation. NAIRU had become a moving target. Never has it occurred to these folks that perhaps the whole blasted model has been short-circuited by an information-age economy that has propelled higher rates of sustainable and non-inflationary productivity growth.

The other defect of the Keynesian model is that it has diagnosed the economy's problem as one of insufficient consumer spending. For example, former Congressional Budget Office and Office of Management and Budget director Alice Rivlin has said that the Bush tax rebate plan can only help the economy if workers rush out to K-Mart and Toys "R" Us and clear the aisles of merchandise with their $300-$600 checks. Almost all economists on Wall Street agree with her. This is absurd. Over the past two years the two major components of overall demand in the economy, consumer purchases and government spending, have been on a tear. Total public sector expenditures continue to sprint ahead at a speedy 7 to 8 percent annual pace, and retail spending by Americans has been as strong as ever until the last month or so.

The driving force of the modern economy is not consumer demand but investment, which is driven by the cost of capital. When capital costs rise—for example, as a result of higher tax rates, unstable monetary policy, regulatory tightening, or rising interest rates—the economy contracts. Right now tax rates are too high and money is much too scarce to induce investors to invest, and to induce businesses to expand. In the current environment, it matters not a whit how much consumers are itching to spend if there are no profits in production. If Bush can solve the twin problems of excessive taxes and insufficient money, the economy will get squarely back on its virtuous 3 to 4 percent real growth path.

The joke these days in Washington is that if the economy doesn't turn around soon, Bush intends to go back to the Vatican to see the pope again. But as the stock market continues to decline and aggregate wealth losses now exceed $4 trillion, getting America moving again will require more than prayers and pep talks. Bush's current strategy of sitting back, crossing his fingers, and banking the Republican party's future on the optimistic forecasts of economists who have a woeful track record could hardly be more inadvisable.

Last week, House speaker Dennis Hastert received a rousing ovation at the Republican House caucus meeting when he announced that he would make a capital gains tax cut a

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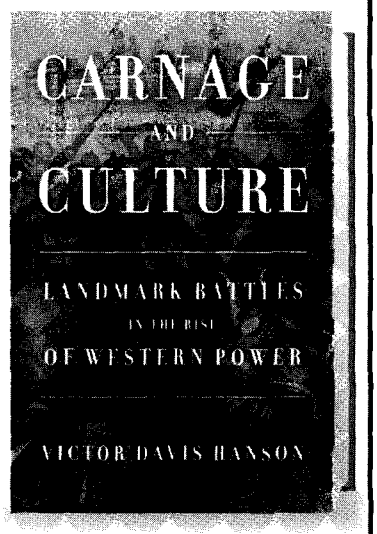

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—*The New York Times Book Review*

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top legislative priority. There were groans of disgust when Hastert then intimated that the White House would prefer to wait until next year. House Republicans, who face the voters in just 14 months, realize that they don't have the luxury of waiting another six months to discover if the dismal scientists are, for once, right. ♦

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You Won't Even Read This Article!

That's how little Americans care about campaign finance reform. BY WILLIAM G. MAYER

WHAT DOES THE American public think about campaign finance reform? Actually, it doesn't think much about it at all. Though it is rarely mentioned in the typical media story on the subject, campaign finance reform is the epitome of a "Beltway issue": one that greatly concerns pundits, reporters, editors, and (at least some) interest-group leaders and elected officials, but simply doesn't strike the average American as all that important. No matter how often the nation's editorialists lecture them on the issue, the American public consistently says they'd prefer that Congress and the president move on to other matters.

I had heard this charge made many times by opponents of the McCain-Feingold bill. But it wasn't until I took a closer look at public opinion about campaign finance reform for a just-published academic book on the subject that I realized how strong the evidence is on this point.

In fairness, there are a few questions that, if considered in isolation, seem to point to the opposite conclusion. If you simply ask Americans whether campaign finance is "important" or should be "a high priority" for Congress, a sizable number (though not a majority) will say that it is. But the more one examines these data, the more it becomes apparent that questions of this type set a low and undemanding threshold for the typical survey respondent. It is all too easy to say that an issue is "important" even though one may not have invested any real interest or effort in it. How many Americans, for example, would deny that world hunger is "important"—yet how many actually give the issue any weight when deciding how to vote?

Clearly what is needed are questions that measure the *relative* importance of campaign finance as compared to other issues. And whenever questions take this form, campaign finance winds up near the bottom of the list. In 1997, for example, a CBS/*New York Times* poll asked respondents which of four issues—the economy, education, campaign finance, or crime—was "most important right now." Forty-two percent said crime, 32 percent chose education, and 19 percent said the economy. Only 4 percent said campaign finance.

In 1998, a Market Strategies question offered a different list of issues—tax reform, health care reform, campaign finance reform, and Social Security—and asked which was "the most important to address right now." Again, campaign finance finished dead last, and by a substantial margin: 33 percent said health care, 27 percent Social Security, 26 percent tax reform, 7 percent campaign finance.

Election Day exit polls typically offer voters a list of issues and then ask which one or two mattered most when they decided how to vote. So far as I can tell, 1994 was the only year when "campaign finance reform" was included in this list—and even though respondents were allowed to check off two different issues, only 4 percent cited campaign finance. All

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told, it ranked eighth of nine issues, well behind crime, the economy, family values, and abortion, and just one percentage point ahead of "foreign trade/NAFTA." In a similar vein, the Harris poll regularly asks its samples, "What do you think are the two most important issues for the government to address?" In 31 separate polls conducted over the last eight years, the largest number of Americans to mention "campaign finance" was 3 percent. In most surveys, it winds up as an asterisk (i.e., the issue is mentioned by less than half a percent of all respondents).

The Gallup poll's results ought to be definitive. In January 2000, Gallup asked respondents to assess the importance of 25 issues, including education, health care, taxes, poverty, crime, race relations, foreign trade, and even "presidential character." Remarkably, "campaign finance reform" ranked 24th on the list; the only issue it beat was "policy concerning gays and lesbians." (Presidential character, supposedly despised by the voters, actually was ranked number eight.)

Did the 2000 campaign—in particular, John McCain's candidacy—elevate the importance of campaign finance in the public mind? Not a chance: In January 2001, Gallup presented respondents with a list of 14 possible goals for the new administration, and asked what priority each goal should have. This time, "improving the way political campaigns are financed" ranked last.

The American media, of course, take a very different perspective on this matter. According to Paul Taylor, a former reporter and finance-reform enthusiast who now heads a group called the Alliance for Better Campaigns, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* together have published more than 80 editorials on campaign finance reform in 2001 alone, plus another 80 or so op-ed pieces or letters-to-the-editor on the subject. As Taylor put it, even though this issue "doesn't evoke deep passions among the public, it has an unyielding grip on the imagination of the nation's elites—starting with that rarefied precinct known as the newspaper editorial board room." Remarkably enough, Taylor apparently sees nothing even mildly troubling about this.

What makes all this so noteworthy is that for almost 15 years the press has frequently criticized conservatives and Republicans for pursuing issues that allegedly aren't ranked high among the public's priorities. This trend goes back to the 1988 presidential campaign, when a substantial part of the media was outraged by George Bush's victory, though they could never explain what exactly made Bush's campaign so immoral. But one common explanation had it that Bush won only because he used "manufactured issues"—the Massachusetts furlough program, the pledge of allegiance and flag-burning controversies—that had not been on the public's radar screen before.

Eventually, a whole series of proposals and experiments emerged, often lumped together under the rubric of "civic journalism," which urged the media to play a much more active role in dictating the agenda of American election campaigns. Though the details varied, most proposals called on the media to use some combination of surveys and less-structured interviews to develop a list of issues that were "important to the voters"—and then to demand that the candidates address these issues, whether they wanted to or not. As the *Charlotte Observer* declared in a front-page editorial launching its coverage of the 1992 campaign, "We'll Help You Regain Control of the Issues."

Many news organizations, even ones that weren't associated with the civic journalism movement, embraced the idea. One of its sharpest early critics, for example, was Leonard Downie, the executive editor of the *Washington Post*. Yet David Broder, whose fairness and integrity are legendary in the Washington press corps, described that paper's intentions for the 1992 campaign by saying, "We need to show our respect for our readers by taking their concerns seriously; at the

GREAT MOMENTS
IN
INTERNET HISTORY

1971:
AL GORE INVENTS THE INTERNET

1988:
BILL GATES BECOMES FIRST
INTERNET BILLIONAIRE

2000:
BILL GATES BECOMES LAST
INTERNET BILLIONAIRE . . .

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Washington Post, we are trying to let the voters' agenda set our coverage agenda."

I am not, I should make clear, a supporter of the civic journalism movement. In my view, proposals of this sort greatly underestimate the complexity of determining what the public thinks and cares about, and undervalue the importance of political leadership. But as a matter of simple consistency, I keep waiting for all these civic journalism proponents to write even one article taking McCain, Feingold, et al. to task for harping on an issue that the public obviously doesn't care about. According to the standards of civic journalism, it was particularly unconscionable that campaign finance was placed so high on the Senate's agenda this year, ahead of education, health care, Social Security, and all the other issues that are considerably more important to the average voter. Alternatively, I'd settle for a series of articles by former civic journalists admitting that their earlier writings were wrong or simplistic, and promising not to criticize anyone else for talking about issues that don't rate high in the polls.

Not having been born yesterday, I don't expect most major media outlets to begin openly confessing their errors and inconsistencies. But it is reasonable to hope that the media would recognize that their own obsession with campaign finance is not shared by most Americans and then take that into account when they report on the issue. Instead, a great deal of reporting and commentary on campaign finance suggests that ordinary Americans are as consumed with the issue as the press is.

Take the case of Doris Haddock, aka "Granny D," the 91-year-old political activist who walked across the United States in 1999 to drum up support for campaign finance reform. The American media, predictably, found her story irresistible, and gave her a great deal of highly favorable coverage, generally portraying her as the point person for a huge grass-roots movement—even though there is some evidence that she undertook her expedition precisely because expressions of mass enthusiasm were not forthcoming.

But how would Haddock have been treated if she had marched for a cause less treasured by media elites—say, the pro-life side of the abortion issue? Most likely, she would have been either ignored or dismissed as a flake. Never having met Granny D, I assume that she is a decent and well-meaning person, and I applaud her dedication and commitment. But as a simple matter of accuracy and context, any media stories about Granny D should have noted that the extraordinary importance she attached to the campaign finance issue was, in fact, not shared by the vast majority of Americans who don't write editorials for a living. ♦

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The Phony Defense Budget War

While the Bush administration and Congress fiddle, the Pentagon burns.

By Gary Schmitt & Tom Donnelly

Last Wednesday, in testimony before the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee, Defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld fired the latest salvo in his campaign to recast American defense strategy and to rescue the fading hopes for this year's Pentagon budget. But Rumsfeld's campaign is less *blitzkrieg* than *sitzkrieg*—a "phony war" on behalf of an already inadequate $18 billion increase over Bill Clinton's last planned defense budget. Whatever the outcome of the skirmishing in Congress over the next few weeks—whether an increase of, say, $10 billion or the full $18 billion—the result will be far less than is needed to fix the many problems besetting the American military.

On behalf of his $18 billion, Rumsfeld was eloquent: "We need every nickel of it," he told the subcommittee, "not only [to] begin to repair the damage done by a long period of under-funding . . . [but to] lay the foundation for the effort to transform our armed forces for the 21st century."

What makes Rumsfeld's appeal ring hollow, however, is the fact that he has yet to convince his commander in chief of any pressing need. Since early February, when spokesman Ari Fleischer boasted that the Bush administration was not going to "throw money in the direction of defense," it has been abundantly clear that the president and his political advisers considered their tax cut to have far higher priority than defense. Ever since, the Pentagon has been in retreat.

Thus, after initial studies, Rumsfeld concluded that the 2002 defense budget needed to be raised by an additional $36 billion. On advice from the Office of Management and Budget, the president agreed to just half that request. Then the Democrats won control of the Senate, the tax cut and the economic downturn combined to reduce federal budget surpluses, and many congressional Republicans—especially the leadership—again proved themselves to be budget hawks first. Rep. Jim Nussle, the Republican chairman of the House Budget Committee, has even turned the administration's early excuse for not seeking a serious supplemental increase this year back against it: "I am very concerned about the fiscal responsibility behind continuing to fund the defense of the past," he recently said.

But the facts of the case show that current spending is inadequate to support today's force, let alone any "transformed" force of the future. In their preparatory work for the Quadrennial Defense Review, Clinton officials estimated that the Defense Department might need as much as an extra $50 billion per year. Even this figure was among the lowest estimates of the "strategy-resources" gap. Analyses by the Congressional Budget Office, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Brookings Institution, and others reported similar or even higher figures. The outgoing secretary of the Air Force pegged the gap at $100 billion. And none of these estimates included new Bush administration priorities, such as conventional-force transformation or a global missile defense system.

In sum, the price tag for any realistic program to rebuild and reform the U.S. military is well beyond the marginal sums the administration and the Congress are now fighting over. While Rumsfeld has been touting the Bush defense request as "the largest increase in defense spending since the mid-1980s," he simultaneously acknowledges that "this budget won't get us out of the hole we are in." Especially since next year's budget may barely keep pace with inflation.

Given this, Rumsfeld has only two fundamental choices: (1) make cuts in current force structure to pay for modernization in the near term and transformation for the

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longer term, or (2) maintain current forces while continuing the weapons "procurement holiday" of the past decade and deferring any real transformation.

Initially, it seemed that Rumsfeld would choose the force-cut option. Many of Bush's defense and national security aides believed that high-technology "transformation" was the silver bullet that would restore American military strength at a relatively low cost, and that the end of the Cold War had ushered in a "strategic pause" where there would be no great-power competitor to the United States. It would be logical, they reasoned, to take a little more risk today to prepare for or deter a bigger threat tomorrow.

Thus, as recently as six weeks ago, press reports suggested that Rumsfeld might reduce the Army by two active-duty divisions, the Air Force by two dozen squadrons, and the Navy by a carrier group or two. The administration also believed it could mitigate the risks of force cuts by abandoning the Clinton policy of "engagement" that has resulted in the proliferation of peacekeeping and other constabulary missions of recent years—Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, but especially the Balkans and the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq.

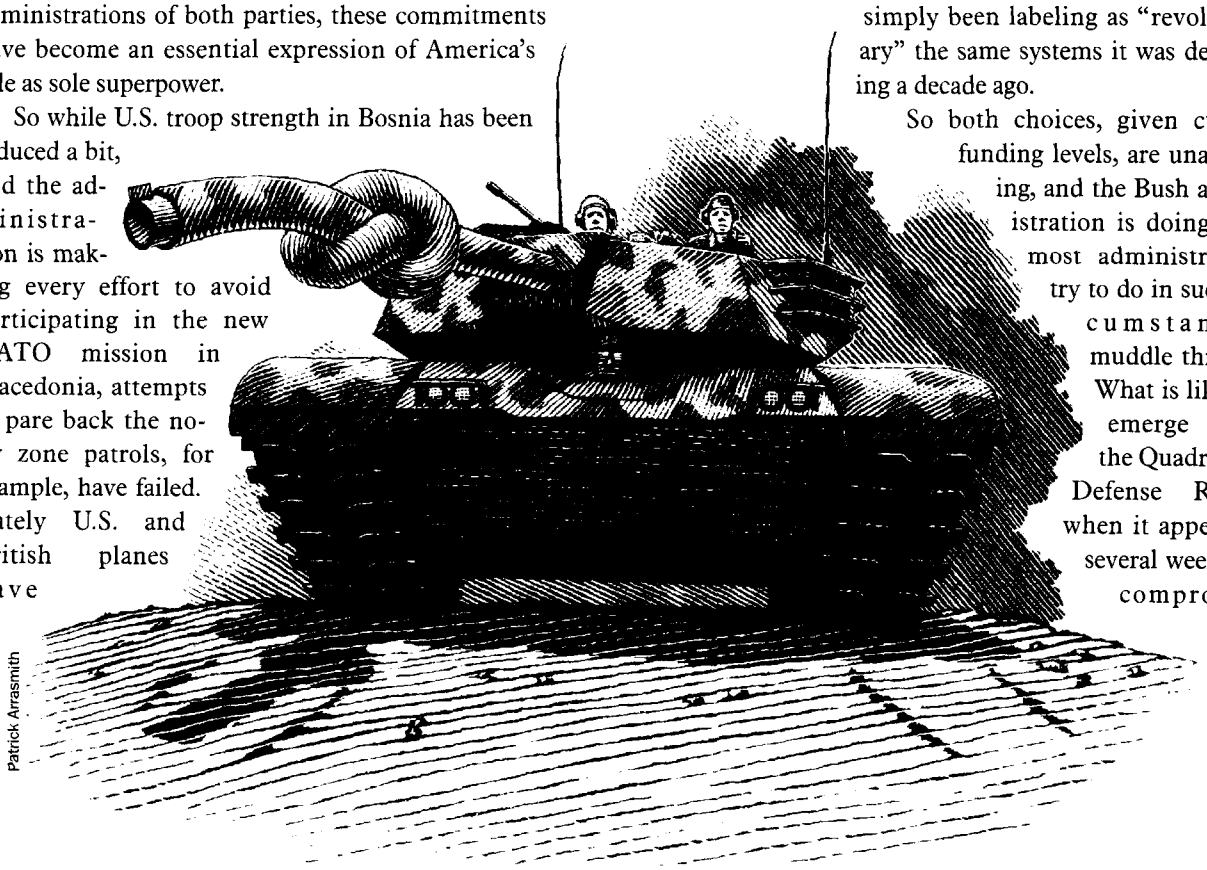
But the logic of American global military commitments has quieted most talk of force cuts. The Bush administration has backed away from its hope to be able to reduce these commitments appreciably. The fact is that, after a decade of post-Cold War experience, through administrations of both parties, these commitments have become an essential expression of America's role as sole superpower.

So while U.S. troop strength in Bosnia has been reduced a bit, and the administration is making every effort to avoid participating in the new NATO mission in Macedonia, attempts to pare back the no-fly zone patrols, for example, have failed. Lately U.S. and British planes have been bombing Iraq as frequently as ever, responding to the increased threat from Saddam Hussein's air defenses. Rumsfeld has been frustrated even in his attempt to pare back the long-running mission in the Sinai—"The place could be protected by a terrier," he says, "and Colin Powell agrees." Not surprisingly, given the low-level but angry war now being waged in the Middle East, a withdrawal of American troops from the Sinai seems imprudent. So as the realities of America's role in the world have sunk in, the enthusiasm for deep force cuts has cooled considerably.

But the second choice—deal just with today's needs while postponing investments for tomorrow—is equally unpalatable. "We've been living off the investments of the 1980s for too long," complains Rumsfeld. He's right. Over the past decade, hundreds of billions of dollars in weapons research and procurement has been deferred. The average age of U.S. military aircraft will soon exceed 30 years. The Navy shipbuilding rate is so anemic that the fleet will soon be just 300 ships, less than half the size of the Reagan years. The Army's tanks and infantry vehicles are reaching 20 years of age, with no replacements on the books.

The challenge of transformation is real. "The proliferation of weapons with increasing range and power into the hands of multiple potential adversaries means that the coming years will see an expansion of risks" to American cities, warns Rumsfeld. Innovation in the armed forces has been dangerously shortchanged; the Pentagon has simply been labeling as "revolutionary" the same systems it was developing a decade ago.

So both choices, given current funding levels, are unappealing, and the Bush administration is doing what most administrations try to do in such circumstances: muddle through. What is likely to emerge from the Quadrennial Defense Review when it appears in several weeks is a compromise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solution, featuring just a few force cuts and a considerably less-than-advertised transformation, all of this glossed over with a variety of "efficiency" initiatives, high-sounding rhetoric, and smoke and mirrors. In other words, the Bush administration's defense strategy—or its lack thereof—will be a continuation of Bill Clinton's.

In only one way will the Bush defense review depart from Clinton policies: It will renounce the "two-war" standard that has been the basis of post-Cold War U.S. defense planning and the stable measure of American power. The fundamental tenet of this standard is that U.S. forces should be sufficient to fight and win two "major theater wars"—like the 1991 Gulf War—at once. Anything less has been regarded as inadequate to maintain global military preeminence, thus inviting adversaries to cause trouble and allies to doubt us. This is why Colin Powell contended in 1992 that a two-war capability was the minimum needed for American strength and credibility. It was, he said, a sign saying "Superpower lives here."

The Rumsfeld one-and-a-half-war approach, and President Bush's decision not to increase defense spending significantly, will have real effects on American foreign and security policy. Reluctance to support NATO operations in Macedonia is just the tip of the iceberg. NATO countries already have been spooked by reports that the Rumsfeld review would recommend cuts in the U.S. garrison in Europe. Although the cuts will likely be masked as reductions in headquarters "tail" to preserve combat "tooth," they are certain to be read as a lessening of American commitment to European security. This, in turn, will complicate efforts to expand NATO, deal with Russia on security issues, and ensure that any common European defense policy remains firmly linked to NATO and to the United States.

The Rumsfeld one-and-a-half-war approach, and Bush's decision not to increase defense spending significantly, will have real effects on our foreign and security policy. Reluctance to support NATO operations in Macedonia is just the tip of the iceberg.

There will be consequences for U.S. policy in the Middle East as well. While Israel can, for the moment at least, take care of itself (and in fact the administration has been wisely allowing it to do so), the long-term American role in the Persian Gulf has been an unanswered question through the Clinton years. The Bush administration has promised to take a harder line against Saddam Hussein, conducting a lengthy review that has flirted with the option of going beyond containment to overthrow of the Iraqi regime. But without sufficient military force to ensure Iraq's defeat and occupation, that option will be off the table.

The administration has rightly placed a new emphasis on East Asia. While it hasn't worked through exactly how to deal with China—and the tensions between American trade and security interests in the region remain unresolved—the administration deserves high marks for moving to strengthen and expand U.S. alliances, especially its little-remarked opening to India. But until there are new military realities to match this farsighted rhetoric, these words ring hollow, too.

In continuing Clinton-era policies, President Bush is retreating from the post-Cold War standards set forth by his father. In 1992, the first Bush administration called for an active force of 1.6 million in 12 Army divisions, 20 Air Force wings, 12 Navy carrier groups, and so on. While Rumsfeld has yet to decide on the final details of the future force, it might well have just 1.3 million men and women on active duty and as few as 8 or 9 Army divisions, 11 to 12 Air Force wings, and 10 carrier groups. At the same time, the promise of conventional-force transformation, global missile defenses protecting America and its allies, and control of space will be deferred until the distant future.

President Bush came to office with an extraordinary opportunity to rebuild and reform the U.S. armed forces and to preserve the peace of the post-Cold War years. If he had made a defense build-up a priority, he would have found plenty of support in Congress. Instead, on his watch, the situation is getting worse. As Rumsfeld himself recently said, "Each year we put off these critical investments, each year we kick the can down the road, we are digging ourselves deeper and deeper in the hole." He continued: "It's like having a credit card. If you pay only the minimum every month, the interest will accumulate and the cost of digging out of debt gets bigger and bigger."

Because no real solution to our defense needs is possible without significantly increased spending, the phony war over the 2002 defense budget represents another chapter in the saga of all relevant parties'—the president and the Congress, Republicans and Democrats—irresponsibly kicking the can down the road. A pretty disgraceful performance all around, but particularly disappointing for an administration that assured us help was on the way. ♦

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The Battle of Trenton

Can Bret Schundler pull off another upset?

By James Higgins

In the good old days of American conservatism, young Reaganites imagined there would one day be a sort of apostolic succession from Ronald Reagan to Jack Kemp. When Kemp's star faded and Bret Schundler was elected mayor of Jersey City—a bright spot for conservatives in 1993, that bleak first year of the Clintons—some of those same hopes came to rest on the tax-cutting 34-year-old Wall Streeter, who like Reagan and Kemp had managed the trick of appealing to urban Democrats. Now, a decade later, Schundler faces an uphill race for the governorship of New Jersey that will settle the question of whether his brilliant future lies ahead of or behind him.

Schundler, 42, is the youngest son of a New Jersey family of nine, a Harvard graduate with a picture-postcard family, and an articulate, telegenic spokesman for the full range of conservative causes. He has a record of appealing to minority voters—in his 1997 reelection, Schundler won 70 percent of the Hispanic vote—and to Democrats. Jersey City is a multiethnic melting pot, with only 6 percent registered Republicans. Pre-Schundler, Jersey City had a long, often embarrassing, and always Democratic political history, including decades of domination by Democratic thug Frank "I am the law" Hague. As Steve Forbes describes it, in Jersey City before Schundler "the newspapers had a stock headline: 'Mayor Indicted.'" Hague got away with it, but three other Schundler predecessors were term-limited by the criminal justice system.

Schundler's first victory in 1992, in a special election with 19 candidates, could be written off as a fluke in which voters did not realize they were casting a ballot for a Republican. It is much harder to make such a claim about his two victories in subsequent regular elections in 1993 and 1997, when he won 69 percent and 59 percent of the vote.

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Schundler's opponent this year is Jim McGreevey, a former state legislator who is now mayor of Woodbridge, a city of some 95,000 residents three turnpike exits south of Jersey City. McGreevey faced no serious challengers for the Democratic nomination. His campaign heavily emphasizes the words "work," "respect," and "values," and mentions the middle-class careers of McGreevey's parents and grandparents—cop, nurse, Marine Corps drill instructor—almost as often as the campaign mentions the candidate himself.

Positioning himself as a reform mayor and centrist, McGreevey is running on such Clintonian bromides as "Recognize and respect New Jersey's diversity as a strength," and "Commit to ending racial profiling." His chief issues are uncontroversial micro-subjects such as the reform of administrative law courts. McGreevey's real claim to the Democratic nomination is that he came within one percentage point of upsetting former governor Christine Todd Whitman in her 1997 reelection bid.

Whether that presages a victory for McGreevey this year is no sure thing, since the 1997 race was run more as a referendum on Whitman than anything else. Whitman by then may have become the *New York Times*'s favorite Republican—an extreme abortion rights advocate who moved steadily leftward after pushing the tax cuts that got her elected through the legislature—but her electoral base had soured on her. She beat McGreevey by 26,000 votes in a year generally favorable to incumbents, while winning 100,000 fewer votes than in 1993. McGreevey was clever enough to hammer at Whitman over high auto insurance rates—a perennial winner for challengers and headache for incumbents. But it was, in effect, a one-candidate race. In that sense McGreevey has not really been tested in a tough statewide contest.

The course of the New Jersey governor's race already rivals a Robert Ludlum novel for bizarre plot twists. The seat was expected to be an open one, with Whitman forced by term limits to leave office. McGreevey, respected by state Democrats for the race he ran in 1997, was expected to be the Democratic nominee. Then, in July

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2000, Sen. Robert Torricelli entered the race. Torricelli might have been a formidable challenger, but the same flamboyant campaign finance practices that may win Torricelli a federal indictment won him an ice-water welcome into the race. He gave up within weeks.

Schundler and New Jersey Senate president Don "Donnie" DiFrancesco expected to run against each other in the Republican primary. The two might as well have come from different planets. DiFrancesco is the archetypal insider from the bipartisan Trenton legislative clubhouse, at home with deals and patronage and opposed to anything that might rock the boat, such as a Schundler-sponsored educational choice plan that would have benefited poor children in Jersey City's abysmal public schools.

But Whitman was rewarded for her early support of George W. Bush with an appointment to head the Environmental Protection Agency, and her departure made DiFrancesco the acting governor. The attendant stature and publicity should have been a huge advantage. Instead, it sank DiFrancesco's career and served to remind voters both how smelly the Trenton establishment is and how little scrutiny legislators are subject to as they spend billions of taxpayer dollars. Once DiFrancesco appeared on the radar of the New York print media, scandals spewed forth like a gusher of toxic waste. This outpouring peaked with the revelation that DiFrancesco had been the subject of repeated, bipartisan charges of legal ethics violations when he moonlighted as his township's attorney at the same time he was Senate president. On April 25, barely six weeks before the scheduled primary date, DiFrancesco threw in the towel.

At that point the Trenton establishment really went to work. Rather than graciously acknowledging Schundler as the last man standing, they recruited their 2000 U.S. Senate candidate and former congressman, Bob Franks, to run. Franks was a Trenton clubhouse product, like DiFrancesco. And he had also won enormous goodwill by almost besting Jon Corzine, the ex-Goldman Sachs exec and epitome of what the French call *La Gauche Caviar*, who spent an amazing $63 million of of his own money—$42 per vote—to win his Senate seat. In a further show of evenhandedness and good sportsmanship, Republicans in the New Jersey legislature pushed the GOP primary back three weeks to give Franks time to organize and raise funds.

There was one problem with this scheme: Franks. He ultimately had his sights set on Torricelli, who is widely disliked, facing a criminal investigation for alleged corruption, and up for reelection in 2002. Franks hadn't given much thought to Schundler or to becoming governor. It showed. Lacking a positive agenda, Franks launched a series of ludicrous ads against Schundler, accusing him of being a crazed tax increaser and of raiding a children's scholarship charity to pay for campaign ads. All of it backfired, and Franks's initial 26-point lead in the polls turned into a 14-point defeat in the June 26 primary. To his credit, Franks endorsed Schundler without delay. (The bitter and tainted DiFrancesco *still* has not endorsed his party's nominee, though his refusal to endorse may well help Schundler more than an endorsement.)

With two months remaining, the question now is whether Schundler—trailing McGreevey by almost 20 points—can engineer another dramatic turnaround. New Jersey politics is uniquely volatile because state politics receives almost no TV news coverage. The only VHF station in the state, Channel 9 in Secaucus, focuses on the New York market. Although the Republican gubernatorial primary this year was hotly contested, not until an hour after the polls closed did any TV station in the New York City market say a word about the primary. For the same reason, TV advertising is an expensive matter in New Jersey; any candidate running statewide must buy time on stations that reach millions of viewers who don't vote in New Jersey.

This situation gives an unusually prominent position to talk radio and print media—and among print media particularly to the *New York Times*, which is at least as influential as leading New Jersey papers such as the Bergen *Record* and Newark *Star-Ledger*.

The Franks campaign began to unravel when Schundler faced down a sputtering Franks in a debate on Sean Hannity's drive-time local radio program over Franks's claim that Schundler had raised property taxes in Jersey City by 79 percent. It turned out that Franks's calculation used as its base a year in which Schundler sold off delinquent tax obligations and gave Jersey City taxpayers a five-month tax holiday.

Similarly, sound investigative reporting by David Halbfinger of the *New York Times* did much to finish off DiFrancesco. Since DiFrancesco's withdrawal, Halbfinger and the *Times* have turned their attention to setting the election agenda in articles with objective headlines such as "In Schundler, a Rallying Cry for the Right."

Halbfinger and the *Times*, well aware that New Jersey is a "blue" state that trended Democratic in the 1990s and went 56-40 for Al Gore last fall, have been unyielding in their efforts to focus voter attention on Schundler's support for Second Amendment rights and his opposition to abortion. This focus would be less curious if either candidate were emphasizing these issues. Neither is. Nonetheless, Halbfinger has churned out more than a dozen arti-

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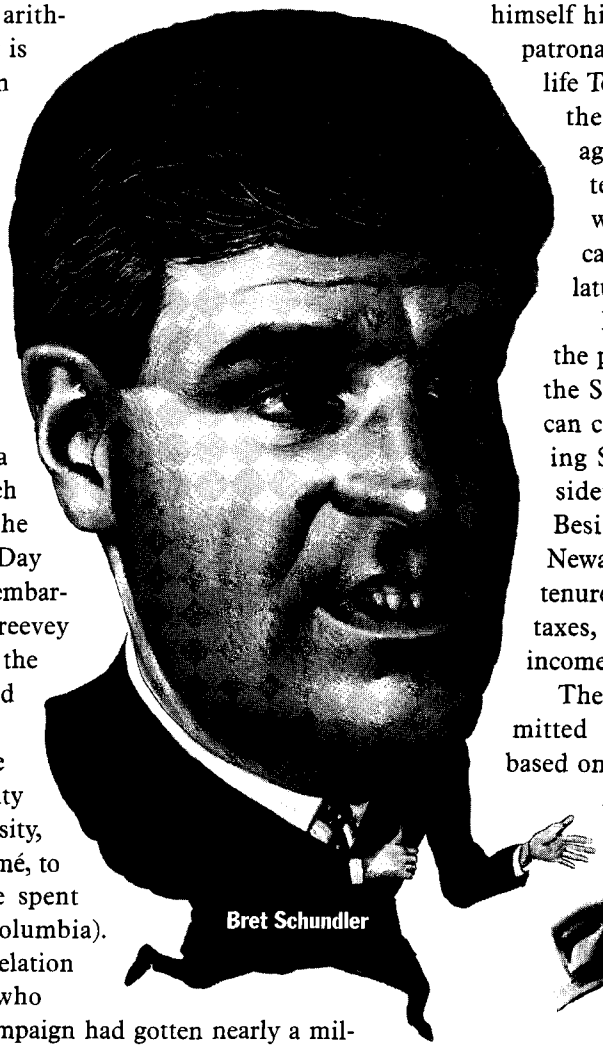
cles using the words "Schundler," "abortion," and "gun" in just the last three months. An industrious press secretary for McGreevey would have to work hard to stay that diligently on message.

Schundler has not always been a perfect candidate. His early political speeches went on longer than a Bill Clinton State of the Union address, but they have shortened with each passing year. The trick for him will be to come somewhere near his mayoral vote totals in Jersey City. That would do serious damage to Democratic electoral arithmetic, since Jersey City is the second-largest city in the state, and normally one of the most Democratic.

The same polls that show McGreevey well ahead show that Schundler is still unknown to many voters. And McGreevey is just beginning to receive the press scrutiny accorded a serious contender—which never happened when he ran in 1997. As Labor Day approached, two public embarrassments hit the McGreevey campaign. The first was the disclosure that he had misled voters about where he went to college (leaving Middlesex County College, Catholic University, and Rutgers off his résumé, to give the impression he spent four years at tonier Columbia). The second was the revelation that the state senator who chaired McGreevey's campaign had gotten nearly a million dollars in legal fees from Woodbridge during McGreevey's tenure as mayor. The latter revelation is ominous for McGreevey because it undermines his efforts to portray himself as a reform mayor rather than as another clubhouse product.



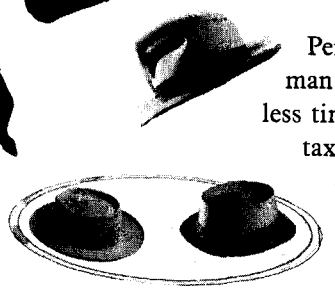
Bret Schundler

Illustration by Earl Keleny

Schundler, for his part, has to hope that his talent for combining populist outrage with small-government issues will strike a chord with voters. He managed this in the Republican primary by advocating an abolition of tolls on the Garden State Parkway, a stand that might by itself have won him the nomination. The seemingly innumerable Parkway tollbooths are a patronage trough, collecting a minute 35-cent toll at high cost and infuriating drivers. In the general election, he has come out against the legislature's looming approval, without a referendum, of a taxpayer-guaranteed sports arena in Newark. The proposed arena would replace the current Meadowlands indoor sports facility, one of whose two main tenants is the New Jersey Nets, a basketball team controlled by the New York Yankees—hardly a charity case needing public funding. Schundler thereby has set himself himself against another Trenton-backed patronage boondoggle—one can envision real-life Tony Sopranos high-fiving each other at the contracting opportunities—and against tax subsidies for wealthy sports team owners. On September 6, faced with the prospect of a major adverse campaign issue for McGreevey, the legislature put the arena plan on hold.

Having achieved a 40-point reversal in the primary polls in less than eight weeks, the Schundler camp now believe that they can catch up with McGreevey by introducing Schundler to voters as a Trenton outsider, whose issues are big and popular: Besides the end of Parkway tolls and the Newark Arena, Schundler advocates teacher tenure reform, school choice, lower property taxes, and inflation-indexing of the state income tax.

The hope is that McGreevey, having committed himself to a front-runner's strategy based on low-profile issues and protecting his lead, will find it difficult to switch to an issue-oriented race if Schundler starts to close the gap between them.



Cockeyed optimism? Perhaps. But Christie Whitman closed as large a deficit in less time in 1993 by calling for tax cuts. The Schundler camp has an interesting model: California 1966. In both cases Republican voters, over the objections of their party leaders, nominated candidates deemed too extreme to appeal to a sophisticated electorate, candidates who had little interest in the state capital status quo and a lot of interest in talking directly to voters of all political and personal hues. A stretch? Probably. But all of Schundler's previous races have been, too. ♦

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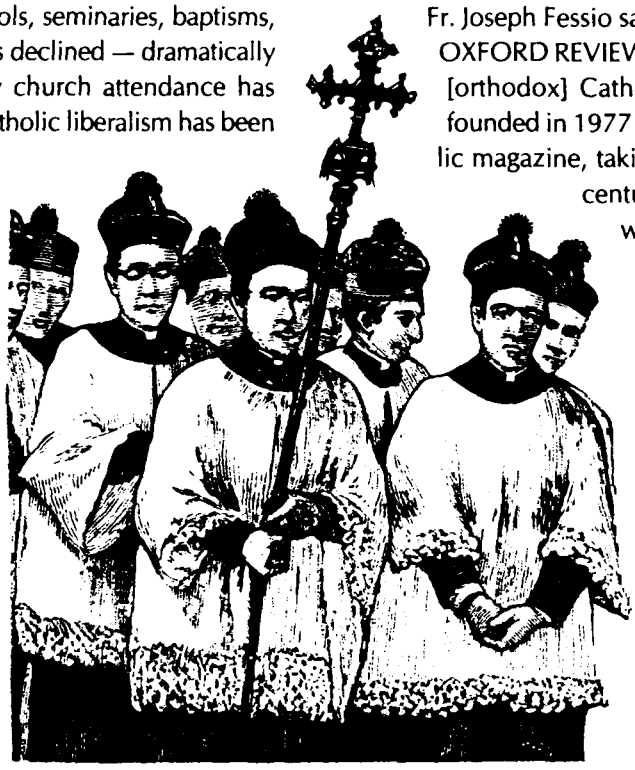
Traditional Catholicism Is Back

Since the 1960s, Catholicism in America has experimented with religious liberalism, and the results are in: Two out of three Catholics don't believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The number of priests, brothers, sisters, Catholic schools, seminaries, baptisms, marriages, and conversions has declined — dramatically in certain cases. And weekly church attendance has dropped from 70% to 25%. Catholic liberalism has been a monumental flop. Of course Father Flapdoodle, Sister Snakebite, and Bishop Bubbles haven't figured that out — they think the 60s never ended. Still trying to be cool cats, they're so *cool* they're frozen in a time warp.



But, mercifully, God's frozen people are thawing out. Where's the fire and dynamism in the Church today? Among traditional Catholics! The dioceses that have no vocations shortage, the religious orders that are growing, and the seminaries that are packed are predominantly the traditional ones. And traditional Catholics have been founding *new* colleges and seminaries. Polls show that the Catholics most committed to the Church are traditional Catholics. Seminarians and younger priests are much more traditional than middle-aged and older priests. The only novel idea in Catholic education is home-schooling, spearheaded by traditional Catholics. The only massive grassroots movement in the Church is the prolife movement, led by traditional Catholics. The only *significant* Catholic presence on TV is the ardently traditional EWTN. The only significant Catholic voice on radio is that of traditional Catholics.

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The Skipper (Alan Hale), the movie star Ginger (Tina Louise), and Gilligan (Bob Denver). Photofest.

Farewell to Greatness

America from Gilligan's Island *to* The X-Files

By David Brooks

I'd never really considered the way George W. Bush resembles Gilligan of *Gilligan's Island* until I read Paul A. Cantor's brilliant book, *Gilligan Unbound: Pop Culture in the Age of Globalization*. As Cantor points out, Gilligan is not the smartest one on the island. He doesn't have the obvious leadership résumé. Yet the audience instinctively sympathizes with him, and the show's creators were right to put him in the center. In episode after episode, the fate of the islanders usually rests in his hands and he usually serves them well.

That's because Gilligan possesses a subtle but important set of virtues: the democratic virtues. He is agreeable. He is decent. He never looks down on people; instead he gives others the benefit of the doubt. As Bush would say, he has a good heart.

He is also public spirited. Though humble, he is forever filled with good-natured plans to make other people happy. He doesn't have a narrow perspective, like the other characters—the Professor, or the Millionaire, or the Movie Star. He doesn't want to mold other peoples' lives for them. But because of him the island is a happy community—happier, the show continually implies, than the world the castaways are stranded from.

Gilligan Unbound
Pop Culture in the Age of Globalization
by Paul A. Cantor
Rowman & Littlefield, 256 pp., $27.95

Though Cantor doesn't make the connection, Bush is a lot like that. He's not the smartest one in his administration. He doesn't possess the aristocratic spirit we associate with, say Churchill, or the intellectual or military virtues of Lincoln or Washington. But he does possess the democratic virtues; he's decent and grounded and in tune with the aspirations and values of middle-class Americans today, who have democratic souls, after all.

Cantor's description of *Gilligan's Island* doesn't mean we need watch some old episodes to learn more about the Bushian virtues. Nor does it mean that we should run to the pop-culture section of the bookstore to look for other books about television in order to illuminate the world around us. I've been through that section; it's filled with the worst academic drivel—utterly useless to any normal curious person looking for insights or even readable prose. Books on television written by academics are always terrible. *Gilligan*

David Brooks is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

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Unbound is the exception that proves the rule. Cantor is a professor of English at the University of Virginia (and a contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD), and his book succeeds despite the fact that it is about television. His insights about life today are so intelligent that they sparkle despite being expressed in the context of pop-culture criticism.

The real subject of *Gilligan Unbound* is globalization. Much has been written about the economic and political effects of globalization, but there's been less analysis of how globalization influences ideas and culture. Cantor takes four shows—*Gilligan's Island*, *Star Trek*, *The Simpsons*, and *The X-Files*—and uses them to show how, over the past four decades, the processes of economic and cultural globalization have undermined traditional attitudes about authority, power, and the role of the nation-state in the modern world.

Programs from the 1960s such as *Gilligan's Island* and *Star Trek* were produced by an America that was benignly confident about its mission to spread the gospel of democracy around the globe. Gilligan's island, Cantor observes, is sort of an ideal version of America. The castaways have left a decadent old continent and they have come to a virgin land. Old social barriers are eroded and they live in a realm of relative equality and natural peace. They show an amazing ability to tinker and come up with new devices, but they are not ruled by technology in any bothersome way. The assumption is that wherever Americans go, they can settle down and create healthy communities; they can Americanize the globe. "In its own simplistic way," Cantor writes, "*Gilligan's Island* portrays America at the peak of its self-confidence, convinced both of its moral goodness and its power to back up its claims to superiority."

The program *Star Trek* expressed those same optimistic assumptions—on a galactic scale. Captain Kirk was always talking about the "Prime Directive," which was the order the crew of the *Enterprise* had received never to interfere in the affairs of other planets. But, in fact, they interfered in almost every episode and almost always in the same way: They deposed tyrants and created democracy. Once Kirk toppled an elite called the Platonians, who modeled themselves on the rulers described in Plato's *Republic*. Another time it was a powerful being who played at being a

Photofest

Mary Ann runs on Gilligan's Island.

Greek God. In a third episode, it was the "Stratos-Dwellers," an aristocratic elite who lived far above their planet's plebeian surface. By the end of each hour, anti-democratic structures were destroyed and the inhabitants of each planet were free to live lives of democratic self-determination. There was even one episode about a planet where people were living in a sort of Garden of Eden—which means that Kirk and his crew were willing to destroy even utopia to make the inhabitants control their own lives.

Business didn't matter much in *Star Trek*. If you were a kid watching that show, you'd want to grow up being an admiral or a diplomat. In this way, as in so many others, the show self-consciously mirrored the power structure of the Cold War era. The show also assumed that as history progressed, power would be centralized into big institutions—interplanetary federations and the like. James T. Kirk was a thinly veiled replica of John F. Kennedy. The speeches which he always overacted near the end of the episode were meant to be rousing, Kennedyesque expressions of liberal internationalism.

By the end of its brief run, Vietnam was beginning to shake *Star Trek*'s self-confidence. And by the time we get to 1990s hit shows like *The Simpsons* and *The X-Files*, we have entered a different *Weltanschauung*. In 1960s television, America is the *agent* of globalization: Americans go out and transform the world or the universe. In 1990s television, Cantor argues, America is the *victim* of globalization: Outside forces come in and threaten or undercut American life.

In the earlier shows there was usually a clear distinction between the democratic and good Americans and the anti-democratic and wrongheaded non-Americans. By the later shows, the outlines of American identity have become blurred. Especially in *The X-Files*, there is no center, no cohesive set of categories to judge truth and falsity, good and evil. It's never clear who has power, or where authority resides. The political leaders, who are the primary actors in *Star Trek*'s version of power politics, don't really exercise control in *The Simpsons* or *The X-Files* world. Instead, in our globalized, interconnected, networked society, power is dispersed among a shadowy web of companies, agencies, cliques, and groups. What matters is the local and the global. The national hardly exists.

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The Simpsons captures the new social structure in relatively benign form, Cantor observes. In the first place, it is set in small-town America, just like *Leave It to Beaver* or *Father Knows Best*. And unlike a lot of recent sitcoms, it is about a nuclear family, though it's not exactly a nuclear family with normal lines of authority.

But this small town is regularly swept by globalization. There are immigrants from places like Albania (whose "main export is furious thought," Lisa Simpson notes) and India. The local company gets taken over by a German conglomerate and becomes Burns Verkaufen der Kraftwerk, while locals study language tapes called "Sycophantic German" so they can prepare for the new bosses. The local Mom and Pop Hardware Store turns out to be a subsidiary of Global Dynamics, Inc.

One of the key characters in *The Simpsons* is Apu Nahasapeemapetilon, who runs the Kwik-E-Mart. Most of Apu's adventures involve a conflict between his desire to cling to his Hindu culture, while trying, in the economic sphere, to become more American than the Americans. When nativists picket his store with placards that read "Get Eurass Back to Eurasia" and "The Only Good Foreigner is Rod Stewart," the local mobster tells him to pose as a native-born American: "Remember you were born in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Your parents were Herb and Judy Nahasapeemapetilon."

Photofest

Mr. Spock, Captain Kirk, and Engineer Scott enforcing democracy on Star Trek.

In *The Simpsons* commerce is what matters. The show, Cantor notes, is scathing about politics. ("I voted for Prell to go back in the old glass bottle. After that I became deeply cynical," Homer declares.) The federal government is virtually non-existent, and when it does appear, it is ludicrous. When the government takes over Krusty the Clown's television show, it gets renamed *The IRS Presents Herschel Krustofski's Clown-Related Entertainment Show.*

Instead the Simpsons live in a world in which the nation-state has largely vanished from their consciousness. The important things are family and neighbors, with an occasional person or force from somewhere around the globe coming in to shake things up. The marketplace is the central arena of life. It's where people try to get rich, or at least buy the best products. Week after week, the Simpsons face the lures of the marketplace and try to survive as a family and as members of a small-town community through it all.

Cantor spends more time on *The X-Files* than on any other program, because, he claims, it represents the apotheosis of all the trends he is describing. In this program, all the Cold War structures are gone. The chief metaphor in the show is not power conflict, as in *Star Trek*. It is infection. Evil forces seep into American life, sometimes in disguise. Early in the series, extraterrestrial aliens seemed to be the menace. Later, illegal aliens emerged as a recurring theme. But in fact secret agencies turn out to be the pervasive threat. In *The X-Files* the politicians on television are merely puppets of secret forces, who commit Nazi-like atrocities. Early in the series, the producers worried whether they could really portray the United States government so cynically, but when they did focus groups, they discovered that the audience was fully prepared to accept a world in which secret agencies assassinate presidents and cover up horrific crimes.

"What is most uncanny about the series," Cantor concludes, "is that we never know who is making the decisions that determine the fate of the world. . . . Moreover, the threats to the world may come from any direction in *The X-Files*. Something that happens

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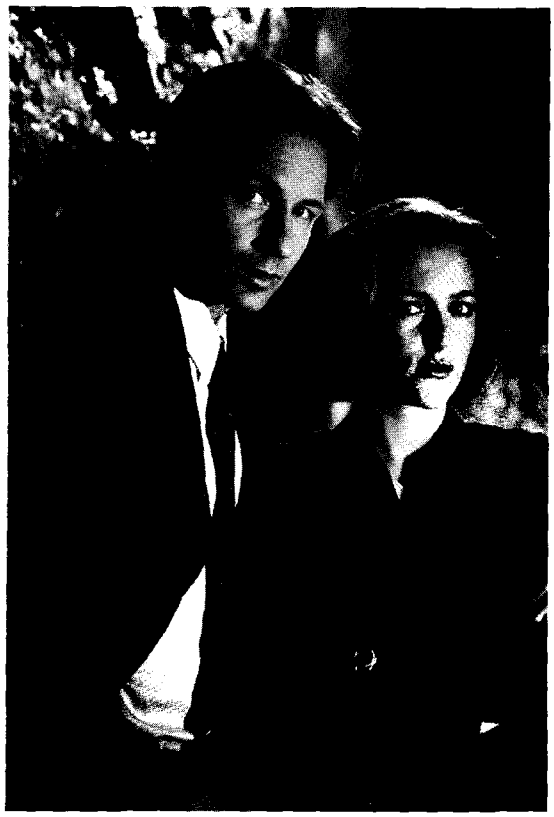

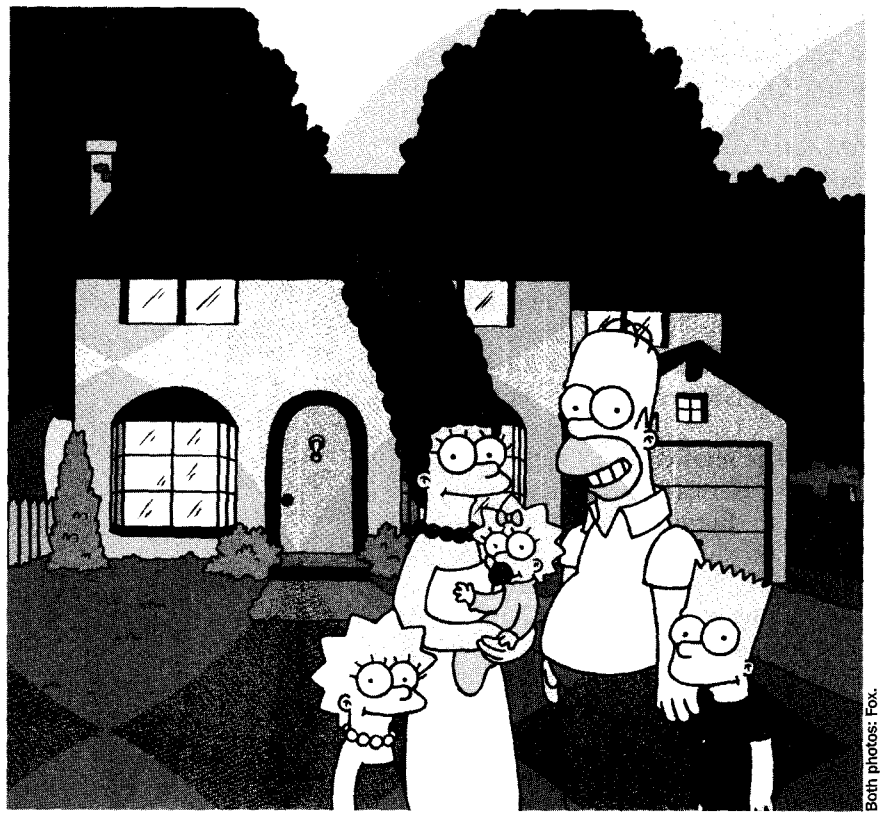

Both photos: Fox.

Left: The original cast of The X-Files. *Right: The stable family of* The Simpsons.

in a remote research station in the Arctic or on the tundra of Siberia may have the potential to destroy life on earth as we know it."

What Cantor is suggesting is that the people who sit at home with 160 channels and watch *The Simpsons* and *The X-Files* look at the world in fundamentally different ways than the people who sat at home and watched *Star Trek* and *Gilligan's Island*. The culture now shown in ancient repeats was centered on a few dominant institutions. The new culture is radically and permanently decentered.

People who are fanatical about these shows will want to argue with Cantor about whether he understands their essential meaning. For the rest of us, what Cantor is describing is a world in which people regard it as normal that their basic units of self-government are continually overwhelmed by powers beyond their control, whether it is the bond markets, infectious diseases, illegal immigration, or global capitalism.

At rare moments in *Gilligan Unbound*, Cantor steps out from behind his pop-culture analysis to drive home the point of the book: "Far from marking the end of history, the triumph of the nation-state in the twentieth century may eventually appear to be equivocal from the point of view of later historians. Someday they may look back on the nation-state as the way-station between the purely local markets of the medieval world and the fully globalized markets of the third millennium." Just as the Greeks wrenched humanity from the notion that the family was the basic social unit, so—Cantor argues at the end of the book—we may be abandoning the notion that the nation is the basic political unit.

Of course, others have argued that the nation-state is withering away, but they have usually done so from an economic perspective. These writers tend to be blissfully unaware of the power of national culture, history, and consciousness. From these writers' perspective, there shouldn't be any conflict in the Middle East because it doesn't make any economic sense. But Cantor's version is far more compelling, because he suggests that faith in and consciousness of the nation-state is withering primarily in the minds of its citizens.

You may want to ask upon finishing the book whether this is just a view one gets from watching too much television. It could be, for example, that all Cantor is really describing is a cynicism fashionable among Hollywood liberals. They used to believe government could do everything; now they've discovered that it can't. So like adolescents who come upon the stunning revelation that their parents aren't perfect, these producers and writers have now decided that government can do nothing. It could be that this cynicism is just a phase or a pose that producers—and their viewers—use to show how sophisticated they are.

But there could also be more to it than that. As Bush's efforts to regulate stem cell research indicate, it really is true that nation-states have trouble ruling these days, since stem cell researchers can easily go overseas. And it is also true that there has been a mas-

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sive and long-standing loss of faith in national government. The most important poll result of our lifetimes, after all, is this: In the mid-1960s, three-quarters of Americans said they had a great deal of confidence in the federal government to solve the nation's problems. Today, only about a fifth of Americans say they do. That does signify something.

If Cantor is essentially right—that the nation dominated the twentieth century, but the twenty-first century will be dominated by institutions that are either local or global—the question then becomes: What caused this shift? Cantor calls it "globalization," but it is never clear what that means. Americans are less aware of the outside world today than they were in, say, the 1950s, when the media really covered foreign affairs and when intellectuals felt compelled to stay up with trends in France and watch movies from Sweden. Sure, the guy behind the counter at Seven-Eleven now comes from Bangladesh, but does that explain a fundamental shift in attitudes?

It could be that Americans' trust in the nation-state has declined because Americans have had thirty years of relative peace. War does force people to rally around the center, and it could be we are so thrilled with commercial abundance that politics and self-government seem like a bother.

Or it could be that the nation-state has simply become a mature industry? Throughout the twentieth century, some large portion of the populace felt that government could grow or change in some dramatic way to herald in a new age. Some thought that change would be realized through the Progressive movement, the New Deal, or the Great Society. Others thought Thatcherite or Reaganite scaling back of government would herald the new tomorrow.

But now government is big and immobile. It's not getting much bigger or much smaller; it's just turning into a machine for churning out Social Security and Medicare checks, and serving as stomping ground for the likes of Clintons and Condits. That doesn't inspire idealism, or even interest.

The other question Cantor doesn't answer is whether the loss of faith in national government, and the eventual eclipse of the nation-state, would be good or bad. Cantor's tone is benign: We now have an exciting new task ahead of us, creating supra- and subnational political structures. Besides, he seems to ask, what's so bad about a world without an overarching government?

Libertarian-tinged thinkers will find little bad about the situation. But others may wonder what can be good about citizens losing the ability to govern themselves. National government, for example, is one way people attempt to control their destiny. Most of us are imbued with a distinctively American culture, which contributes mightily to who we are. Can our distinctly American identity and the values it is based on survive in a world without American nationalism? America has been a tremendous force for good in the world. If the American nation-state loses its saliency, surely that is a tragedy of epic proportions.

Cantor doesn't tackle all these issues, but he does force us to reexamine the world around us—and his *Gilligan Unbound* is a riveting and provocative read. If he's right in his central thesis, then we will spend the next few decades grappling with a fundamentally new political world—and probably looking back fondly on the greatness that was Gilligan. ♦

A Candle Burned at Both Ends

The life and poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay.

BY MIDGE DECTER

Could there be a more persistent biographer than Nancy Milford? It has been nearly thirty years since she first approached the dragon who stands guard over the memory of Edna St. Vincent Millay—that is, the poet's younger sister Norma—and asked her to hand over the treasure left in her keeping: the poet's huge and scattered store of letters, papers, snapshots, notebooks, and drafts of poems.

Savage Beauty
The Life of Edna St. Vincent Millay
by Nancy Milford
Random House, 576 pp., $29.95

At that time, Nancy Milford had just published a biography intended to redress the low estate of the reputation of Zelda Fitzgerald, wife of F. Scott Fitzgerald, and perhaps as a result of its special appeal to the then-increasingly militant population of American women, or perhaps merely on its own merit, the book sold more than a million copies. This may have been what influenced Norma Millay to give up her own ambition to be her sister's biographer, or she may simply have been overtaken by the sheer force of Milford's passion to do the job. Whatever the reason, what followed from Norma's capitulation was a decades-long and clearly arduous authorial mission—"mission" does seem the only word for it—that has resulted in a careful, loving, minutely drawn portrait of this once celebrated and now largely neglected doyenne of American poetry.

Perhaps, one feels the impulse to say, the portrait is *too* lovingly and

Midge Decter is a writer in New York. Her memoir An Old Wife's Tale: My Seven Decades in Love and War *has just been published by HarperCollins.*

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Bettmann / CORBIS

Edna St. Vincent Millay [illegible] blossoms.

minutely drawn. The story of Edna St Vincent Millay is endlessly interesting in itself—she was by all accounts an utterly alluring woman, a kind of enchantress, actually, who led a fascinating and complicated life—but what Nancy Milford has achieved is akin to drawing a map of the world with the lines of latitude and longitude left out.

Everything is present: the girlhood poverty, the extraordinarily important and complicated family ties, the myriad lovers, the brilliant friendships, the applause, the books, the publishers, the prizes, the international adulation, and the perpetual nonstop boozing—boozing, indeed, unto death. What's missing is the poetry that gives us reason to be interested. To be sure, Milford treats the reader to a few tantalizing lines, but they are given no greater importance, and usually less, than stray notes sent off to her family and friends. The story of Edna St. Vincent Millay depends on the writing of the poetry—and on what, alas, the world thought about that poetry by the end of her life. Without the poetry, it is merely another tale of 1920s literary bohemia: interesting, but hardly singular.

That bohemia was, as we know, a community of people who worshipped art and forswore the life of bourgeois constraints lived by their more ordinary fellow-citizens. Not all its denizens, by a long shot, turned out to be of much significance in the life of the arts, though most of them believed themselves to be. With certain notable exceptions they professed left-leaning political sentiments, but politics did not until the 1930s become a matter of real passion among them. And they tended to live from hand to mouth—financially, emotionally, and sexually.

No doubt a life in bohemia, with all that swimming in alcohol and art and all that scattered but still terribly intense sex, will continue to seem romantic to the young and the prematurely settled down of every period. It unmistakably has to Nancy Milford, who along with its disquiets does a terrific job of evoking its aura of romance. The problem is, however, that unless Edna Millay were some kind of oddity among the authors of serious poetic work, what would truly have occupied her deepest passion were those verses that were forming in her head, sounding in her ear, and flowing from her pen. Admittedly, that kind of passion would be difficult to distill in a biography like *Savage Beauty*, which is wholly captive to its so relentlessly detailed narrative, and simply comes to an end with the death of its subject.

But one cannot read Milford's book without encountering the question of what in the end became of all those lines, many in the form of sonnets and ballads, some of them merely witty bits of defiance, some long narratives, and all of them the work of a genuinely important poet. (Random House is bringing out a volume of her poetry in conjunction with *Savage Beauty*, so Nancy Milford's long labor has in this way resulted in rekindling some attention to Millay the poet, even if only for the sake of creating what publishers call a "package.")

As a poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay seems to have vanished from the poetic pantheon. She may be remembered now and then as one of those bygone creatures that used to be known as "lady poets." Schoolchildren might be required to memorize a verse or two (if schoolchildren are anywhere required to memorize anything these days). And of course, her famous saucy quatrain is still quoted by the upscale college girls who come across it:

My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night;
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—
It gives a lovely light!

But where are her books? Where is she to be found in those collections published for use in courses of English? It is hard to remember that she once occupied pages and pages of the anthologies. There was "Renascence," the poem that made her a celebrity, written at an incredibly young age, and "Huntsman, What Quarry?", once as famous as poetry gets in America. There were her gestures toward Ovid and the Romans that showed her talent for epigram:

Death devours all lovely things:
Lesbia with her sparrow
Shares the darkness,—presently
Every bed is narrow.

There were her widely known New York poems:

We were very tired, we were very merry—
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry;
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere.

And there was the pose of wry sophistication taken in the sonnets

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that she turned out by the dozen:

I, being born a woman, and distressed
By all the needs and notions of my kind
Am urged by your propinquity to find
Your person fair, and feel a certain zest
To bear your body's weight upon my breast
So subtly is the fume of life designed
To clarify the pulse and cloud the mind
And leave me once again undone,
possessed.
Think not for this, however, this poor treason
Of my stout blood against my staggering
brain
I shall remember you with love, or season
My scorn with pity—let me make it plain:
I find this frenzy insufficient reason
For conversation when we meet again.

One of the things that put a little tarnish on Millay's immense reputation was that in the 1930s she became so impassioned about Nazism that she wrote a few basically propagandistic poems intended to stir anti-German sentiment among the American public, most famously a long poem about the Nazi destruction of the Czechoslovakian town of Lidice that appeared in *Life* magazine. She also agreed to take part in a radio campaign organized by the then-celebrated journalist Dorothy Thompson, insisting over and over that Americans must come to the aid of the country's fellow democracies, Britain and France.

Such behavior was hardly considered praiseworthy among most of the members of the community of arts and letters, many of whom among other things had not made up their minds to support the side of the "bourgeois-capitalist" society in which they lived until the country was actually at war.

An even more important stress placed upon her reputation, however, was the growing schism between the highbrow and the popular created by the modernist revolution. And Edna St. Vincent Millay was certainly popular. She won prizes. Her books sold well. Moreover, she traveled all over the country to read her poetry to huge and enthusiastic audiences—she was said to be a thrilling performer—and she even read her poems over the radio, coast to coast. She lived until 1950, and though Nancy Milford did not put it this way, between the lines one can see that she died a lonely, broken woman.

Readers of Edmund Wilson's *The Shores of Light*—and how many of those are to be found among us these days, I wonder—will find at the end of that 1952 book a tribute to her written after her death. Wilson had once been in love with her, as had many men, and he had remained something of a friend—though he, too, had expressed disapproval of her using her gift to stir the public against the Nazis. But in the course of his elegy he says, "Let me register this unfashionable opinion here, and explain that Edna Millay seems to me one of the only poets writing in English in our time who have

Bettmann / CORBIS

Millay with her husband, c. 1945.

attained to anything like the stature of great literary figures in an age in which prose has predominated."

Of course, it was not only prose that predominated in 1952: Among the poets, there were the towering figures of Eliot and Pound and Yeats, with Auden coming on close behind them. Granting, says Wilson, that "there is always a certain incommensurability between men and women writers," which makes it difficult to compare her to these three, in his view she did have in common with them her capacity to give "supreme expression to profoundly felt personal experience, she was able to identify herself and stand forth as a spokesman for the human spirit, announcing its predicaments, its vicissitudes, but, as a master of human expression, by the splendor of expression itself, putting herself beyond common embarrassments, common oppressions and panics."

A tribute both extravagant and more than a bit stuffy (on both counts not at all like its subject), it betrays the pressure of the need to assert what had already become, in Wilson's own words, an "unfashionable opinion." Not that Wilson had ever shown himself loath to express unfashionable opinions, but in this case he somehow cannot offer this one with his customary authorial transparency. Perhaps without meaning to, he himself had also succumbed just a little to the tide of fashion.

In any case, no one, and least of all Edna Millay, could actually live "beyond common embarrassments, common oppressions and panics," and such things must inevitably be part of the telling of the story of a life. But they should not do so without pride of place for that which has to matter most—"the splendor of expression itself."

What better way to attempt to explain a poet than simply by quoting? In a sonnet from her book *The Harp-Weaver*, Millay writes:

Euclid alone has looked on beauty bare
Let all who prate of beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth and
cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage; let geese
Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
From dusty bondage into luminous air.
O blinding hour, O holy, terrible day
When first the shaft into his vision shone
Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
Has looked on beauty bare. Fortunate they
Who, though once only and then but far
away
Have heard her massive sandal on the stone.

Beauty indeed—though, whatever the book title claims, hardly savage. Still to have sent a reader looking for Edna Millay's sonnets ought by itself to be thanks enough—and thanks indeed—to her indefatigable biographer, Nancy Milford. ♦

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A late-14th-century philosophy lesson, from *Grandes Chroniques de France*. Archivo Iconografico / CORBIS.

Guiding the Perplexed

What a liberal arts education ought to be.

BY DIANA SCHAUB

The guidebook is a flourishing genre. You could start with Maimonides's twelfth-century *Guide of the Perplexed* and end with the 32,000 books the keyword "guide" brings up on Amazon.com.

To seek a guidebook, whether on the mystery of the divine or the mystery of the carburetor, requires awareness of one's perplexed condition. It is, in its way, a Socratic spur. The popular series entitled *The Complete Idiot's Guide to* . . . exaggerates the deficiencies of its purchasers. Idiots who buy guidebooks aren't *complete* idiots; they at least know they don't know.

Diana Schaub is chairman of the department of political science at Loyola College in Maryland.

The authors of the eight small volumes of the "ISI Guides to the Major Disciplines," published by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, assume an audience not of "complete idiots" but of "students" who yearn for a liberal education and who have at least a vague sense that their yearning is not being answered by the academic institutions supposedly devoted to that high aim. The ISI guides would seem to have their genesis in the conviction that today's pedagogy and curriculum are impoverished, but that the souls of the young remain resilient and receptive, outfitted by nature with perduring longings.

Maimonides dedicated his famous *Guide* to his "honored pupil Rabbi Joseph," who unfortunately could not remain by his teacher's side. Writing in the hope of bridging the distance separating him from Rabbi Joseph (and other promising students, "however few they are"), Maimonides enjoins his pupil "to approach matters in an orderly manner" and thereby reverse the "stupefaction" caused by having "acquired some smattering of this subject from people other than myself." Since true teachers are rare (even in those places where a profession is made of teaching), there arises the makeshift solution of "distance learning."

For the ISI guides, the more modest aspiration is—as Harvey Mansfield puts it in his volume, *A Student's Guide to Political Philosophy*—to be "a subordinate guide, one with the office of introducing you to the true guides." For individuals still in school, the guides offer a sort of compass, enabling them to navigate even the most treacherous curriculum and locate those courses that promise better sailing. For more independent and lifelong learners (whether in school or not), they offer overviews of significant fields of study and suggest suitable readings.

Readers who take up the guides would be well advised to read the two general volumes first, before turning to the tours of specific disciplines. In *A Student's Guide to Liberal Learning*, Father James V. Schall, S.J., writes with the sort of charming and quirky earnestness that awakens the desire for liberal learning even in those whose desire had been unfelt—and students may find it more fascinating to plunge into "Schall's Unlikely List of Books to Keep Sane By" than to trudge through their assigned course work.

Mark C. Henrie's *A Student's Guide to the Core Curriculum* remains more securely within the horizon of university offerings. Although many academic institutions have abandoned their responsibility to formulate programs of study, Henrie shows how one of the symptoms of decay—the elective system—might be self-consciously used to provide oneself with the foundations of Western civilization. He provides background briefings to help students find solid courses in a number of

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different departments and suggests supplemental readings that might act as a counterweight to ideologically skewed syllabi: "If you find your philosophy professor uninspiring, . . . you might want to talk to a classics professor or to a professor of political science who teaches ancient political theory."

Each of the six guides to a particular discipline is well done. The condescension in these essays is not the false sort manifested by lording it over the beginners, but genuine outreach. The authors' irony, when it appears, is directed more toward their wayward peers than toward the readers and learners. "This guide is not intended for other professors," Mansfield notes, "so it is not equipped with footnotes. I have written it to tell you what I really think (up to a point)." It's a great pleasure to observe the way in which powerful and acclaimed minds craft elementary discourses, bringing what they do and why they do it within the ken of the average eighteen-year-old.

Most intriguing to me were the guides on the discipline I know the most (Harvey Mansfield on political philosophy) and the discipline I know the least (the late Paul Heyne on economics). Regardless, I came away from each book chagrined at the gaps in my education. Perhaps these guides should be required reading for professors to rescue them from the narrowing clutches of research agendas, professional development, and what goes by the name scholarship.

Although billed as guides to the major disciplines, covering "the most important fields of knowledge in the liberal arts," the project might be faulted for having a rather blinkered vision of which studies count as liberal. There is barely a nod to the medieval quadrivium of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. None of the natural sciences is included, none of the fine arts, and aside from economics, none of the social sciences (political philosophy—an honorary member of the humanities—is included, but not political science or government).

What accounts for the neglect of mathematics and the natural sciences? Is the assumption that those parts of the university are in better order and, thus, students can do without supplemental guidance? Or is the assumption that the natural sciences can make no contribution to liberal learning, that they are not (although they may once have been) humane endeavors? I suspect it is the latter, in which case, this student self-reliance project strikes me as insufficiently radical. It accepts the ghetto of the humanities, when it ought at least to make the case for the unity of knowledge and the reintegration of the sciences into the liberal fold. In *A Student's Guide to Philosophy*, Ralph McInerny does condemn the lamentable direption of philosophy and science. But the project as a whole doesn't challenge those fortresses in the midst of the modern university: the departments of biology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics.

A Student's Guide to Liberal Learning
by James V. Schall, S.J.

A Student's Guide to the Core Curriculum
by Mark C. Henrie

A Student's Guide to Economics
by Paul Heyne

A Student's Guide to the Study of History
by John Lukacs

A Student's Guide to Literature
by R.V. Young

A Student's Guide to Philosophy
by Ralph M. McInerny

A Student's Guide to Political Philosophy
by Harvey C. Mansfield

A Student's Guide to U.S. History
by Wilfred M. McClay

ISI Press, 49 to 112 pp., $6.95 to $7.95 each

As science has progressed in its technical mastery over man and the world, we see daily that science conceived simply as method cannot yield wisdom. What does the fracturing of the university mean for the universe? Perhaps additional guides could be commissioned opening up these fields to those who want to understand the fundamentals of the ancient and modern pursuits of scientific knowledge and what those fundamentals mean for human life—which is to say, my criticism amounts to a request for more guides.

Will the intended audience really read these guides? And, more important, will they be guided by the guides? It is undeniable that there are obstacles in the way of securing a wide and willing audience. Neither parents nor colleges seem likely to welcome the notion that such supplements are necessary. Why buy an item for $6.95 that seems to call into question the $100,000 just paid for a college education?

Moreover, I'm just not sure how reasonable it is to expect very many students to become "self-reliant." Students need teachers. These slim volumes, helpful though they are, are not teachers. It may be that the soul can be fully alive and present to another through the written word—and thus that great books are true teachers—but the vast majority of American college students aren't readers yet. I fear that these pamphlets are a bit too much like those ambitious summer reading lists that high-school teachers prepare for the college-bound kids. It's important to hand out such lists, but one can't expect many takers, even among those who thrill to the aspiration the lists express.

Socrates famously described his teaching as midwifery. The students must undergo the difficult labors themselves, but they need someone else there to help them. While the aim of education is to make individuals who are capable of learning on their own, it's pretty tough to tell the woefully miseducated that they must deliver their educations by themselves. We shouldn't forget, however, that America is a nation of do-it-yourselfers. Who knows what's possible with a good guidebook in hand? ♦

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President Bush recently used a chainsaw while wearing "a cowboy hat, aviator sunglasses, earplugs, and heavy gloves." He should have "dressed more appropriately," with "Kevlar logging chaps," a "wraparound mesh face-mask," and "more aggressive hearing protection." That's "how the real pros dress, the ones that work with chainsaws all the time."

— *New York Times* editorial, August 28

LUMBERJACKING

Safety Lapses Mar Timber Tourney

By CHAIM KLEULITZ

SNOPES, Ore., Sept. 10 — To hear the event's organizers tell it, this year's Lumberjack Olympics, a quadrennial gathering of champion axemen from all over the globe, have been successful beyond their wildest dreams.

"We've got 34 countries represented, it's standing room only every day, and ESPN has covered us live the entire time," notes Avery Browridge, president of the International Blade and Handle Association, the worldwide governing body for timber sports. "It's an unqualified triumph."

Most athletes in Snopes this week — and thousands of fans who paid $30 a day to see their heroes in action — appear to share such enthusiasm.

But record gate receipts and unprecedented media attention cannot disguise what's happening down in the mulch pits. And an unmistakable pattern has emerged there. Dozens of medals have already been awarded. All but one of them have gone to lumberjacks who employed strikingly similar — and minimalist — safety gear.

Top analysts in New York, a city that is to championship woodchopping what Mecca is to Muslims, are aghast. And the team representing New York at this Olympics, Manhattan's storied West 43rd Street Logrollers, is threatening to boycott Thursday's closing ceremonies unless uniform safety standards are reaffirmed by the IBHA.

"Look around," complained West 43rd Street spokesperson Gail Collins, 55, whose performance in the compressed air blower finals yesterday produced a cloud of sawdust but no medal. "We've been almost completely shut out. Is it a coincidence we're the only club that hasn't stripped down to cowboy hats, aviator sunglasses, earplugs, and heavy gloves?

"It's obvious you can win that way, but it's unfair and dangerous. People should be dressed more appropriately." Collins said team captain Howell Raines had filed a formal protest.

But late today Browridge told reporters he was unfamiliar with either the Logrollers or their grievance. And senior IBHA officials say they will not disqualify any medalist simply because of what he was wearing.

West 43rd Street's hopes for this year's games seem dashed.

Friday's underhand chop competition hurt the team badly. In this event, contestants stand on a thick block of yellow poplar and swing a hatchet "underhanded" between their feet, racing the clock to cut the wood clean through. Underhanded hatchetwoman Maureen Dowd, 49, has been the pride of West 43rd Street for more than a decade. But she finished dead last.

Some opponents privately contend that Dowd's poor showing was no surprise. Olympic choppers typically replace their axes every few months so as to keep a sharp blade. Dowd, however, relies on the same old "saw," year after year, and there are those who claim she's lost her edge.

Dowd laughs at the suggestion. "The real problem is I still care about clothing in my work and they don't," she said today, resplendent in a wraparound mesh face-mask and vulcanized rubber ear muffs. "The gear is heavy and nowadays that's a disadvantage. But this is how the real pros dress, and I'm a pro.

"Besides, a girl feels naked out there without her Kevlar logging chaps."

In Sunday's tree-topping finals, West 43rd Street's Raines, 58, climbed the slippery pole faster than anyone else. But even this, the club's lone medal, feels like something less than a victory, because the man thought to have been Raines's chief climbing rival — his teammate Bill Keller, 52 — was prevented from competing by a freak injury suffered earlier in the day.

According to Raines, the two men were alone in a staging area, performing an equipment check, when Raines lost control of his chainsaw. Intending to rescue his friend, Keller attempted to stop the deadly blade by pinning it between his thighs, but he slightly misjudged the angle. State police headquarters in Salem declined comment.

Urologists at USC Hospital in Los Angeles, where Keller was flown for emergency reconstructive surgery, say he remains in critical condition. Should he survive, he has been offered a regular columnist's spot at a lumberjacking newsletter widely read back home in New York. "This is not a consolation prize," its publisher, Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., insists.

Still, Keller's career as an active woodsman is over, and that stark reality is sinking in. At noon on Monday, all of Manhattan went eerily silent as ordinary New Yorkers, millions of whom work with chainsaws all the time, turned off their motors in tribute to the "lumberjack's lumberjack." Keller once remarked that less strenuous sports like fly fishing reminded him of "that creep

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the weekly Standard
SEPTEMBER 17, 2001

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Solving Shortages through Teacher Cooperatives

Paul T. Hill is a research professor at the Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

Although evidence is mixed about whether there is a national shortage of teachers, big-city schools definitely have trouble finding capable people. There are also general shortages in science, mathematics, and special education.

Civil service and collective bargaining conventions prevent school systems from getting the teachers they need in three ways: by forbidding extra pay for people with rare skills; by tying pay increments to seniority rather than performance; and by emphasizing training in pedagogy over knowledge of content, even in math and science.

These problems all stem from politics and collective bargaining. One possible solution is to create a new status for teachers with rare skills. Science, mathematics, special education, and other **teachers could be employed by independent organizations, which would be vendors to the school district and provide instruction on a contract basis.** Such organizations—let's call them teacher cooperatives—could employ and provide salaries and benefits for teachers for whom the school district would pay on a contractual basis. They could pay as much as districts now pay for teachers—more than $60,000 a year, combining salaries, benefits, and expenditures for in-service training and substitutes. The cooperatives would then be responsible for recruitment, training, and compensation.

As contract employees, teachers would not be covered by the same rules on pay and certification that now constrain school districts. Younger teachers, who would receive relatively low pay as district employees, might prefer to work through cooperatives.

Teachers employed by a cooperative could be assigned to work in more than one school. Thus, an advanced physics teacher might be able to work in two or three high schools rather than just one. Some individuals might keep jobs in industry or pursue advanced degrees while working part-time as teachers. Community college faculty could also moonlight (or daylight) as schoolteachers. Cooperatives could pay more for teachers with advanced degrees than colleges and universities now pay their adjunct faculty.

Individual teachers' pay and benefits, including contributions to vested retirement accounts, could be based on scarcity of skills and individual performance, rather than on seniority. Thus, highly capable younger people, and individuals who were masters of pedagogy in one discipline, could maximize their own productivity and pay.

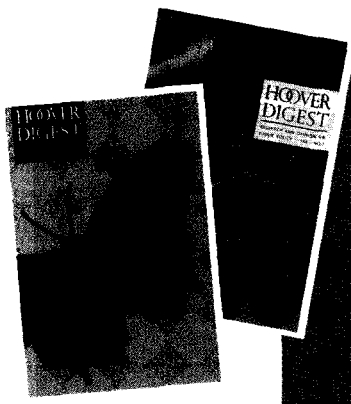
Cooperatives—with strong incentives to use teachers' time as efficiently as possible—would assign teachers only to those courses that they taught especially well. Cooperatives would also promote experimentation with effective ways to use capital, especially computer-based instruction and televised presentations by master teachers. The cooperatives might, in fact, be the mechanism whereby high-leverage uses of technology are finally brought into the public schools.

Cooperatives might also provide school leaders. As with teachers, school leaders would be contract employees and thus would not have to meet all the arcane requirements that apply to district-employed school principals. School districts facing shortages of principals would then be able to tap a fresh supply of people experienced in managing small organizations.

Cooperatives would eventually be self-supporting. Philanthropic funding and initiative, however, are needed to get them started.

— Paul T. Hill

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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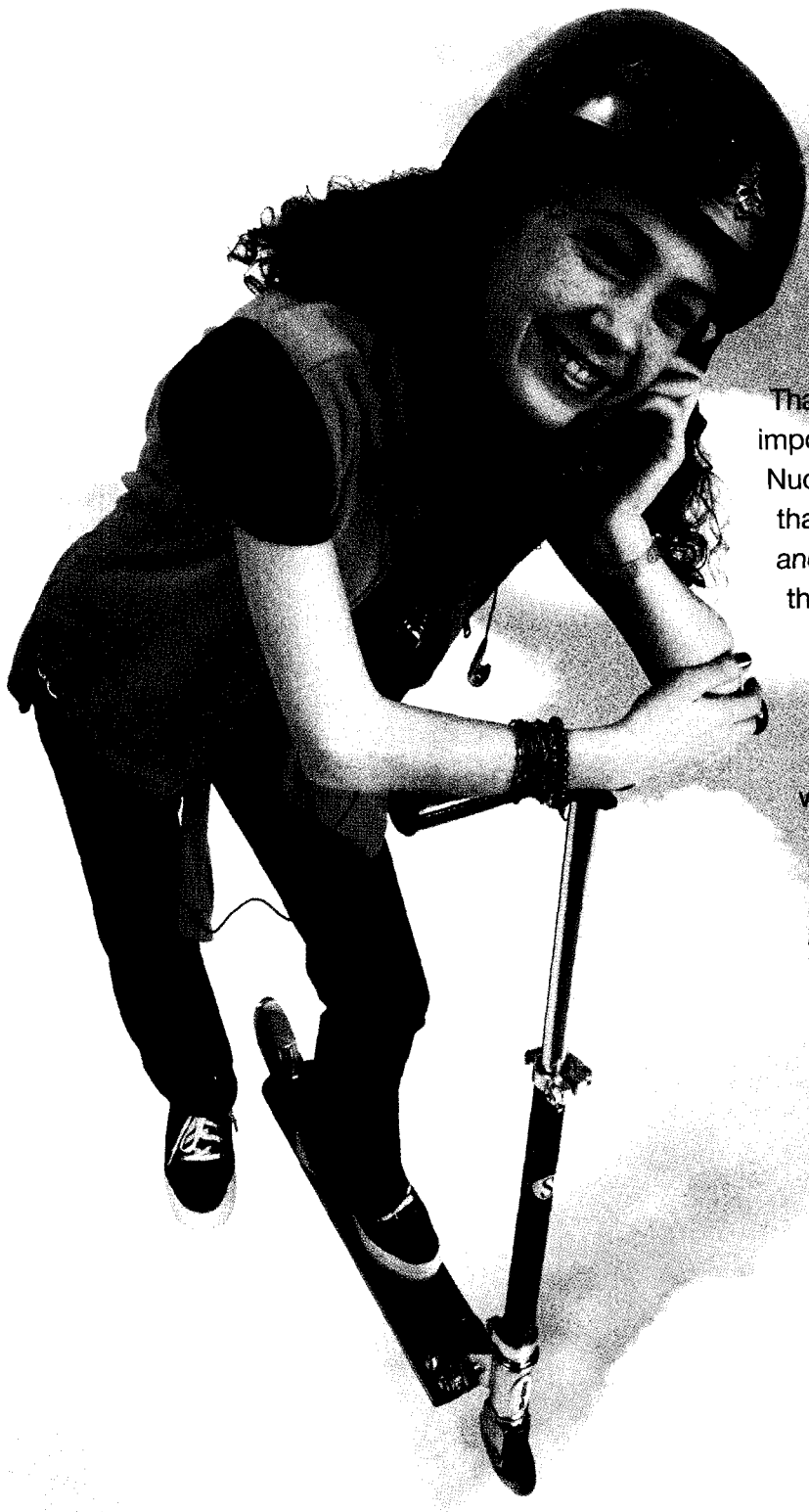

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